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TABLE OF CONTENTS

VICTORIA LOCALS ONLY - RIVAL GANG.....	4
VANCOUVER VENGEANCE - HASHTEROID.....	6
CALGARY CARNAGE - WIDOW'S PEAK.....	7
SHR-EDMONTON - CONTENTION.....	8
MONTREAL MASSACRE - DOPETHRONE.....	9
BRANT BJORK.....	10
PHIL CAMPBELL AND THE BASTARD SONS.....	11
ABSOLUTE SUBCULTURE.....	13
HARDCORE ALLEY - SHALLOW END.....	14
SASQUATCH.....	15
BURN THE PRIEST.....	17
ROSS "THE BOSS" FRIEDMAN.....	19
BRET "THE HITMAN" HART.....	20
CALGARY HORROR CON.....	21
BLOODSHOT DAWN.....	23
KVELERTAK.....	24
HERON.....	27
TITTY TITTY BONG BONG.....	28
ON PUTIN'S BLACKLIST.....	30
THE PENSKE FILE.....	31
URN.....	33
SUPREME ECHO - EARLY OTTAWA PUNK.....	34
ABSOLUTE HORROR.....	35
GREBER.....	37
CUFFS THREE DEADLY DAYS OF KUNG FU.....	39
PROHIBITION 2.0.....	41
ABSOLUTE FILM REVIEWS.....	42
ABSOLUTE ALBUM REVIEWS.....	43
ABSOLUTE LIVE REVIEWS.....	44
THE PUNK SHOW - DWARVES.....	45
EXITS.....	46
ABSOLUTE COMIC-GEDDON.....	47
SHRED SESSION - GEOFF DERMER.....	49

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Rival Gang

Interview by Esther Wurley

I had the opportunity to snag Shad from Rival Gang for a quick interview. From the ashes of Breach, The Excessives and Class of 1984 comes a new (but familiar) sound of that quintessential West Coast punk rock that a lot of us 30+ punks grew up listening to and seeing live. I'm stoked on these guys. I had the pleasure of booking their first show, opening for The Dreadnoughts. They were throwing out classic Excessives tracks including my personal favourite, "Repeat Offender." Their next Victoria show is on April 28th at Logan's Pub.

Absolute Underground: Who are you guys?

Shad: We are Jono on guitar, Kent on bass, Dev on drums and me, Shad, on vocals

AU: What made you four get together instead of just reforming The Excessives?

Shad: Well the plan was always to be an original band, but we suddenly had a show and one song of our own. We thought that would make a short set, too short even for lazy drunks like us.

Rival Gang

So we played a bunch of Excessives stuff. We are currently up to three complete originals. Read: lazy drunks.

AU: Got any releases on the horizon, or plans to enter the studio to record?

Shad: I know we are hoping to record summerish time. Jono, of course, is all guns blazing to get it done. He is hands-down the most bone-idle person I have ever known, except when it has to do with playing punk rock. Then he is a fucking machine.

AU: How did you and Jono meet? What made you guys wanna play music together?

Shad: Jono and I met when we were playing for Gordon Head FC. I think we were seven then. I

could say we started playing music together to make a difference, or wanted to make art, or fuck up the establishment and make a stand for what we believed in, but it was 'cause we figured it would help us get laid. We were 13. I doubt we thought of anything else at that age. Well, maybe how we could get some beer for the weekend

AU: What's your favourite subject matter to write songs about?

Shad: Sex! Wait no. Drugs, definitely drugs. Rock and roll is cool too... anything that is not a cliché.

AU: Who's got it better, Victoria or Vancouver? Why?

Shad: I would say Victoria for sure. Vancouver scene sucks. Not in any way the bands, but the scene is weak. However, I am now an old crank and don't get out to shows as much as I used to and most likely I am blowing a douche vape cloud out of my ignorant ass.

VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY

AU: How many punks have you actually shanked in the shower, and who were you thinking about?

Shad: Sadly, none. Back when we put out that song I remember reading a review for it in MRR and the reviewer said the singer sounded like he had been around the block a few times. I was drinking tea and watching #Coronation Street# at the time.

AU: Dream gig?

Shad: Since it is a dream gig, it would be playing the Mabuhey gardens back in '84 with Bad Brains, Dead Kennedys and the Zero Boys.

AU: Top five favourite local bands right now

Shad: ATD, Keg Killers, the Tubuloids, Baptists, Total Shit.

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Hashteroid

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Hashteroid: We are Hashteroid and we are THE undisputed hash metal champions of Quadrant-X5 and also a New York Times Best Seller.

AU: Give us a brief history of Hashteroid, what are you all about?

H: We all about that roll that shit, light that shit, smoke that shit, shit.

AU: You just signed with Cursed Tongue Records – how did this come about? What will change for the band now that you're signed?

H: Niels from Cursed Tongue reached out to us around the time of recording saying he was interested to hear what we were cookin' up, having already heard *Respect The Depths* and digging it. After talking with him and another label we ultimately felt going with Cursed Tongue



summer and with them being based in Denmark, we hope to build a European fanbase so we can spread some hash love beyond this doomed and godforsaken continent.

AU: You'll be releasing a debut album this summer, and from what we've heard so far, it's a fucking ripper! What can you tell us about it?

H: It's a culmination of hard work and harsh tokes brought to life at Bully's Studios last April with Michael Kraushaar (Black Wizard) behind the board. We then turned to Jesse Gander (Bison, S.T.R.E.E.T.S.) of Rain City Recorders for the mix. They both did amazing jobs and we are

Records was the right fit for a bunch of smoke-weed-guys such as ourselves. The label will be putting out some hot wax for us this

supremely stoked on the outcome, definitely a step-up sonically from our previous outing.

AU: The drums in particular seem to be taking far more of a beating than in previous tunes... How does the new release represent the evolution of your sound as a band?

H: As soon as we started playing *Respect The Depths* as the new unit, we started work on the full length. The riffs were flowing at high energy. I think we were always aiming towards this type of a sound, a couple of these tunes had been written around the time of *Respect The Depths*, like let's just play Sabbath really fast and spike it with Motorhead, but also make sure to be really high. The double kicks really amp things up and gives it that gallop and forward momentum that really drives the songs. We wanted to get heavier and thrashier with this record but also get deeper sonically and add some more layers. We used a lot more effects in the studio this time around and even added some Moog synth into a couple tracks.

AU: Do you explore any particular themes or topics lyrically? What are some of the inspirations behind your music?

H: The future is on pause right now. It might be outright canceled. We all know something's gotta give. So more than anything our lyrics are about change, or as Walter Benjamin put it, "The storm of progress."

AU: What do you hope people take away from both the new record and your live performance of it?

H: We hope that people will feel the need to blast a power toke of the mean green and bang their heads.

AU: Wicked album cover – who did it, and what are we looking at?

H: The artwork was done by Adam Vick, who also did the cover for our previous EP. You are looking at some crazy space shit that I don't even know. I

VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

mean, there are various ways to interpret it, but which is the sickest?

AU: What's the plan for the album release, do you have a date set? Will there be any tours to follow?

H: We're going to release the album online on 4/20 for maximum weed cool. We're gonna cheech our way to any town or city that wants a prominent bass tone to lay into their ear drums. We got a nice lil' Western Canada ripper coming up in June with the deadbeat dads in Dead Quiet, also talking with another Vancouver band about a West Coast US rip this fall, so hopefully that comes together.

AU: Any local gigs coming up that you're particularly stoked to tell us about?

H: Going to be smokin out the Astoria on April 22nd with Dopethrone from Montreal, Future Usses from Seattle, and local heathens Craters and Koma.

AU: What does the far future hold for Hashteroid, any long term goals or plans?

H: We hope to tour this album a whole bunch, aiming for some Euro and US dates in the future. Currently writing a batch of new tunes for the next album with the aim of releasing in 2019.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

H: We smoke weed.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

H: Hey hey yo hey, smoke weed everyday.

hashteroid.bandcamp.com/

facebook.com/hashteroid/

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A banner for the 'Terminus Shockwave' event. The background is a bright yellow with a fiery, cracked texture. On the right side, there is a black silhouette of a Terminator robot with glowing yellow eyes and a glowing yellow light on its chest. The robot is in a dynamic pose, with one arm raised. The text '[TERMINUS]' is written in large, bold, black, blocky letters. Below it, 'SHOCKWAVE' is written in a similar but slightly smaller font. At the bottom, 'JULY 27-29 XX18' is written in a smaller, clean, sans-serif font.

[TERMINUS]
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Widow's Peak

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most infamous for?

Chris McCrimmon: My name's Chris and I'm widely feared for my venerable egg consumption.

AU: Give us a brief history of Widow's Peak, who does what and how did you form?

CM: We formed in April of 2016, basically as a series of successful Kijiji ads. Scott (Cressman, rhythm guitar and vocals) and I met, then were joined by Matt Yeomans on vocals, then Mike Jones on bass, and finally found Patricio Cereceda Paulsen on drums. It's not a very romantic story, really. Just a couple of guys looking for heavy music and massages.

AU: Describe your sound, for those of us who haven't heard you before.

CM: We try to bring little pieces of everything together, a little slam, a little grind, a little black metal, but mostly dirty, brutal death metal; usually on the technical side of things.

AU: You're releasing a debut six-track EP this month, congratulations! Tell us a little about

the release, does it explore any particular themes or topics?

CM: Thanks! Our EP, *Graceless*, is kind of a mixed bag. Most gory or perverse subjects are hidden somewhere in there, namely murder, suicide, necrophilia, incest, genital mutilation, and genocide. It's really the product of us experimenting and finding our sound. We're really happy with how diverse, yet cohesive, the result is.

AU: I'm hearing some good old-fashioned 90s death metal influence... can you tell us a little about your inspirations, musically or otherwise?


CM: Definitely some Tampa Bay in our sound! None of us are childhood friends, so we all grew up on different bands. Between the five of us, every subgenre of metal gets a little bit of love. There's never a goal in mind as to what a song should turn out like, so it can really come from anywhere. Believe it or not, most of my guitar work is inspired by The Beach Boys and The Beatles. A lot of the forward-thinking concepts of



the 60s lend themselves surprisingly well to extreme music, if you just give it a little twist.

AU: We're also loving the low-fi but tight production style ... what was the recording process like for this EP?

CM: A complete mess! I produced the guitar and bass tracks, and then we did drums at Ghost Iron Studio here in Calgary, then vocals with our good friend Russ Gauthier of False Flag Studio. We had some personnel changes behind the scenes when we were almost done, and that set us back quite a bit. Luckily, Bevin Booth saved



the day and took the mixing reins, before we sent it out for mastering with the legendary Brad Boatright at Audiosiege. The whole process took about a year, and was stressful as hell. Next release will be done in a much different way. Shout out to Pat for tracking all the drums in two days, though.

AU: You're throwing a release show in Calgary, what can we expect to see there? Hype the show for us!

CM: It's stacked! We specifically requested each band on the bill. We have Path To Extinction, Meggido, Protosequence, and (my personal heroes) Anti-Pattern. There's a good mix of all things brutal, so even the neckbeardiast of forum moderators will like at least one band. We're also giving away free cake as a sign of appreciation to anyone who comes out (yes, seriously).

AU: What happens after the release show, will you guys be hitting the road or filming any videos to promote the tunes?

CM: Well, yes and no. We have plans for both of those, but nothing I can talk about just yet. I can, however, confirm that we will be on the first incarnation of Decimate Metalfest in June, and Metallion festival in August. We also have a lyric video out for our track "CBT", which was curated by the absolute madman Scott Rudd.

CALGARY CARNAGE

AU: Do you have any other gigs coming up that you're stoked to tell us about?

CM: We can't wait for Decimate, honestly. Sloan (the organizer) is a long-time friend of ours and we were honoured when she asked us to come play. It's nice to have something like this growing in Calgary, and it shows how much things are picking up here. We're also beyond stoked to check out Metallion! The almighty Battlecross is headlining this year, and we've never played Prince George, so we're going in almost completely blind. Adventure and shenaniganry await!

AU: Are any of you involved in other musical projects in Calgary?

CM: Not currently. We got kicked out of our choir. Hit us up if your birthday party is missing some hymns.

AU: What should we know about Widow's Peak that we don't already?

CM: We've had some people ask if we were ACTUALLY naked in our Loud As Hell submission video, and yeah, we were. We had bubble bath in there to cloak our genitals, but Scott kept splashing the water around and the bubbles disappeared, so we learned a lot about each other that day.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

CM: If you buy our album, we will almost certainly waste the money on Beanie Babies. Our parents can't take it anymore, and we've been kicked off all the good forums. Please keep us off the streets; don't buy our music. Listen to Protosequence or something.

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wpdm.bandcamp.com/releases

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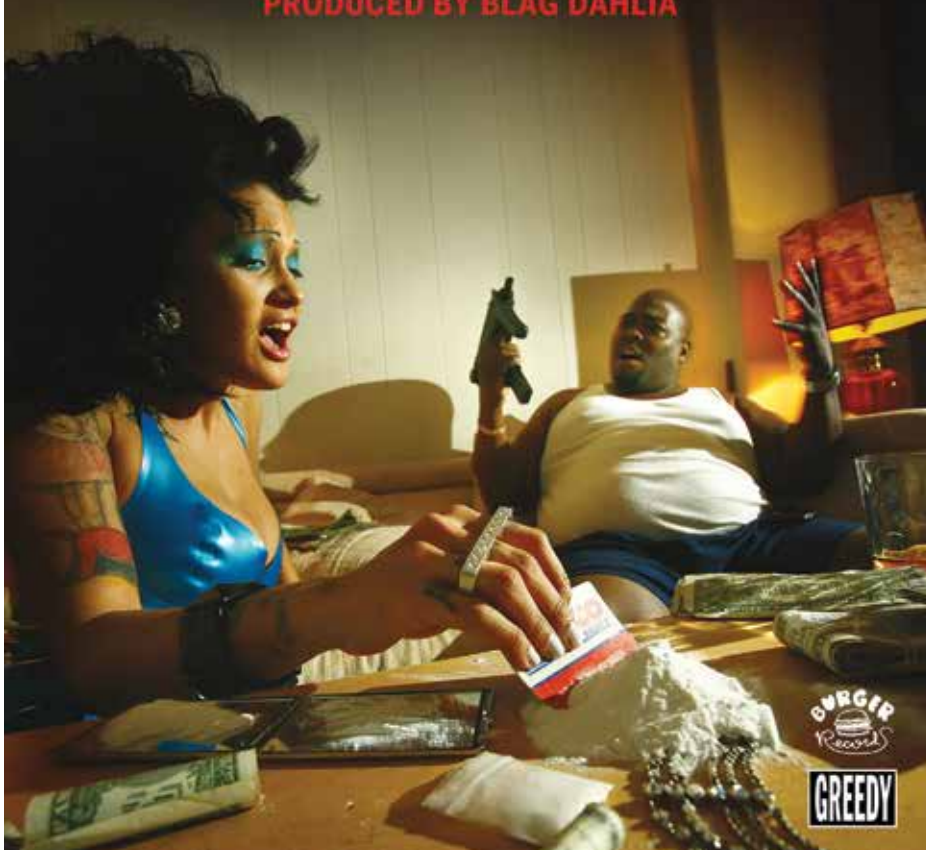
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Contention

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Josh Littlechilds: My name is Josh and I do vocals. I guess I am most infamous for sneaking beverages at shows.

AU: Tell us about Contention. Who's in the band, how did you form, and where are you based?

JL: Well as I said, I am Josh and I do vocals, Lee plays guitar, Justin plays drums, and Brett plays bass. Lee and I formed the band basically out of common interest in heavy punk and grind music and originally asked Justin just to fill in because he's great at drums and he ended up just joining full time after like the second practice. Brett joined pretty recently, only a year or two ago.

AU: Describe your sound for those of us who've never heard you.

JL: We always joke that we're a "groovegrind"

band. We play fast hardcore, it's really grind influenced for sure, but it's also really rhythmic. I feel like if you took some hardcore riffs and just sped them up, that's basically it.

AU: You just released a self-titled album this past December, tell us about it! What can we expect to hear? Do you explore any particular themes or topics on it? The album artwork is rather striking...

JL: Well I knew I was moving to Halifax pretty soon, and we were sitting on about ten songs, so we wanted to bang 'em out before I left. As with any new release, I feel like it's the most "Contention" material that we've written and I'm really happy with it. There's only ever really been one loose theme

with this band's lyrics, and that's aggression. I write about things that piss me off, a lot of times those things are about myself, and to be honest, most of the lyrics for this record were written in a darker time of my life.

AU: The longest song on the album is just over two minutes, making it a lightning-fast listen... was this intentionally done?

JL: Not necessarily, really fast music needs to be short and sweet or else it starts to get boring in my opinion. Again, there's quite a bit of grind influence in this band, so short songs that are more focused on intensity is what we ended up with.

AU: Did you record this album yourself before sending it to Stu McKillop at Rain City for mastering? Tell us about the recording process and experience... is this the process you've followed for releasing all your music?

JL: We didn't record it ourselves, our long time friend and recording engineer extraordinaire Quinn Cyrankiewicz recorded and mixed it. And yeah, then we sent it to Stu. We've followed this

strategy pretty much since day one, so we were super comfortable with Quinn in the studio and recording this album was a breeze.

AU: You've published a music video for the song "You're Wrong," that features a badass girl ripping a bunch of dudes to shreds... is there a story that goes along with this? The gore is great!

JL: To be honest, not really. We had a contact in Vancouver (Lucien Cyr) who made music videos, and we wanted to promote the album so we reached out to him and this is what he came up with after hearing the track. More than anything, it was inspired by B-movie gore and stuff like *Oldboy*. We were super happy with the result, check him out!

AU: I noticed you have a long list of thank yous on your Facebook page – is gratitude particularly important to you as an artist, and why?

JL: I think gratitude is important to any artist. There's a lot of work that goes into local music, whether it's putting on shows, recording, doing art – the music is just a small part of the whole machine. We love everyone that we've had the pleasure of working with over the years and we're especially thankful for anyone who's listened to our music or come to a show.

AU: Where can we find your music, show information, etc?

JL: Our Facebook page isn't terribly active, but you can find all of our music for free on

SHR-EDMONTON

bandcamp and the new album is streaming on Spotify!

AU: Any final words for our readers across Canada?

JL: Just thank you for listening / watching / reading!

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Dopethrone

Interview by Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: Greetings! Where are you now? Describe the room you are in.

Vince: I'm in an old apartment in Paris getting ready to hit the Parisian bars one last night before heading back to Montréal.

AU: Dope is legal soon in Canada, under the Liberals. What does that change?

V: Absolutely fucking nothing.

AU: What does it mean for the band to be from Montreal?

V: It's one of the most multicultural cities in Canada, so we got plenty of exotic food options; it's great when we got the munchies!

AU: How did your band form? What are your goals with the music?

V: It started as a party band! It was all about the free beers. Our goals were just jamming and beerBQ-ing, but now ten years later, we haven't figured that out yet. Goals and expectations, that's not really for us. Touring as much as we can I guess is our immediate goal.

AU: You've got a ton of clips and quotes peppering your songs. Are you a complete

cinemaphile? What movies make you tick?

V: Mostly 70s and 80s horror and all twisted genres from that era. Not very original, I know. Quite obvious for a doom band. We're quoting movies in our songs or artworks, but that is not what drives the band.

AU: Headlining Calgary for the 420 Festival, what do you anticipate the experience will be like? What makes you stoked about playing there?

V: It's our first time in the Western part of the country in our ten years of existence. We're quite excited, plus it will be our first show since Vyke broke his arm last December. Get ready for some Transcanadian Anger! We heard you guys got some dank weed!

AU: Best action film you've seen in the last 12 months and why is that?

V: *First Blood*. Always great. Lots of cops getting it, haha.

AU: You're on Hellfest in France this summer, what a beast lineup! How did that come about?

V: We were on the bill two years ago, but I broke my leg a couple weeks before and we were forced to cancel. They gladly added us again for this upcoming edition. This show is actually part of a Euro Tour we are doing with Bongzilla and Sons Of Otis.

AU: Can you tell us about the song "Shot Down"? It's about a liar. Is it a single person?

MONTREAL MASSACRE

V: It's about bunch of people who acts like cunts. Some people might recognize themselves. If the hat fits you, wear it!

AU: Who do you want to see more of at your shows in the crowd?

V: With the spots in our faces, we can't see anybody anyway, so we don't care who's there or not. But at our shows we like to hang out and party with people, we've met a lot of cool people.

AU: Who inspires you on guitar? Your top three players of all time?

Billy Gibbons, aka King Billy. Skip James. Joan Jett.

AU: Last words to big boss metalheads across the frozen lands:

V: In Slutch We Trust, Tabarnak!

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Brant Bjork

Interview by CC Getty

CC Getty: Brant, how are you doing man?

Brant Bjork: I'm good, thanks. How are you guys doing?

CC: Awesome, man. We're really excited that you're coming up here. You know we tried to get your band - that didn't work out. But then your booking agent came back to me and said, 'You know what, Brant's really stoked for the festival and he'd like to DJ that.' And I thought, holy shit, that would be pretty cool. But this whole DJ thing... First of all, when did that become a thing for you?

BB: Well, I used to DJ back in the late 90s. I had a DJ gig that I used to do for fun on Sunday nights at a bar near my apartment over in Los Angeles. I've been collecting records and making compilation tapes since I was a kid, and it's always been something that I enjoyed. It's like a hobby, so like, DJ'ing... I guess the terminology that makes more sense is more; I'm just more of a selector. And I just, I like to compile music and select music and records and songs and just contribute to the vibe of the party.

CC: What can people expect when they come in to 420 Fest and you're behind the decks playing music?

BB: Well, I mean it's always about high vibration. You're gonna want everyone to have the best time possible and you know my style, I don't really have any signature or confirmed 'styling.' For me it's like, uh, I'll bring the batch that I think will be appropriate and then I'll just kinda improvise on what to pull and what to play. I'm a fan of obscure, trippy stuff, but I'm also equally a fan of things that people have heard and are well familiar with and might have heard 1000 times. I think any song at the right time is great, if it's dropped at the right time, you know?

CC: Yeah I hear ya. I know exactly what you're talking about there and I'm really glad to hear that. What do you when someone walks up and says, 'Hey man, can you play song x by band blank?'

BB: You know it's tough because I'm not gonna be bringing like, a shit ton of records. And I prefer to spin vinyl; I mean that's what it's all about for me. I don't want to be presumptuous but I believe it's gonna vibe all set.

CC: We're gonna have you set up man. We're gonna have two decks for you there. You'll be ready to roll.

BB: Yeah, cool. So yeah, I'm not really one to bring an iPod and just kinda start flipping things around, which is perfectly fine, but I enjoy the vinyl situation.

CC: Will it be mostly 12 inch stuff or are you gonna dig out the 45s as well?

BB: You know what, that's a good question... I don't know.

CC: There's some good shit out there on 45s.

Epecially the flip side sometimes.

BB: You know I had a nice selection of 45s back when I was younger. But I'll have to go through my stuff and see. I think there... I think there will be some 45s, maybe even some 10-inches I'll bring out, too.

CC: When you're DJ'ing, when you're getting your shit together is there like a go-to album that you have?

BB: Hmm... I never really thought about that. That's interesting. I mean I have records that are my favourite records just for, for selfish reasons, you know. I'll just always have to make sure that they're part of it, you know, and that's just a lot of the stuff I love from the late 60s like classic rock. You know, Beatles, Hendrix, Cream, the Who, and stuff like that. I love that stuff.

CC: Hey man you just said Hendrix. Have you seen he's got that new record coming out of a whole bunch of stuff? Unreleased. Have you been checking any of the pre-releases of that at all?

BB: I don't know of the one you're speaking of but I know about three years ago he released a record that was a bunch of unreleased material that Eddie Kramer oversaw the production and released that. That was really good. It was great, actually. Really good stuff. So yeah I don't know. I'll look for that. Um, I also stumbled upon not too long ago a record which was the first night of the Band of Gypsies performance at the Fillmore East. I didn't even know that was out, yeah.

CC: Okay first off, that's one of my top five recordings of all time. It's my favourite Hendrix record. It's actually music that brought me and my wife together and we kinda share all the time. And, when anyone talks about that and knows about that... I didn't know that that existed either. I know there's been some CDs released, some songs from both nights, but never the whole thing all together. That's pretty fuckin rad.

BB: I actually went to a listening... went to this vinyl, actually it was a turntable store. And there was a listening room and they had an assortment of records to choose from. From which to listen to the vinyl player. And that one was in there and it was like, it was wild. It had just been opened, it was brand new, and I was like, I didn't even know it existed. So I put it on and I was like, wow. I was blown away.

CC: Ok so let's get away from the music for a little bit. You know, this is the 420 Music and Arts festival, right? So what does 4/20 mean to you?

BB: 420 was a terminology... It was a term that was part of stoner terminology here in California that I grew up with. It was something that I personally I had friends that took what it was very seriously. They would stop whatever they were doing at 4:20 in the afternoon and get high, and celebrate on, you know April 20th, and things like that. For me I always thought it was just kinda fun and kinda funny. You know, I took it just for what it was. It was just kind of a fun thing, you know.

CC: So straight out for you: Is it indica or is it sativa?

BB: Um, both. It kinda depends on where I'm at. Yeah, a lot of times I'll prefer sativa [to] get some things done, you know. But man if it's the evening and I wanna relax, you know, the indicas are beautiful.

CC: Now you guys just went legal down there in California. Canada as a country is lining that up come July, maybe August 'cause they're talking about pushing that back. It's gonna become legal up here. What's your thought about that, do you think that's ever gonna happen in your home?

BB: Well, I mean with each state that becomes legal here in the United States, I'm certain that it's very inspiring to other states and we're already seeing the domino effect of states following suit, with California being one of those states. Nevada,

I believe, as well. So hopefully it just keeps doing its thing. But you know, like you could all expect, there's a lot of people out there that don't really support cannabis, and some of these people have a lot of power - at least in the United States - and they're gonna do all they can to curb this movement. They have for many many years. So it's gonna be a bit of a struggle and a battle, but California being legal is huge, because we're the cornerstone of the economics of this country and that's a big deal. So, but we'll have to see. You know it's not a situation where people are... it's not like 7/11 of course, it goes without saying. People aren't like just walking into shops, buying bags of joints and everyone's high on the street. You know, we're not there yet. But it's a start, and it's a very positive, powerful start.

CC: So we just had John Garcia up here last week and I was talking to him about all that in California. He told me what he did on the day it went legal. What did you do on the day it went legal? Was it just business as usual for you or did you actually take advantage of walking into a new retail environment and do that experience?

BB: I didn't do much of anything, to be perfectly honest. I think I'm one of these people that, it's like you know, it's been informally legal for me for 30 years. So it wasn't a big deal for me in my personal situation but, in fact to be honest I think I might have even, I don't even know where I was when it went down. I just know that it's here and it's happening and I'm just excited.

CC: So, you're here at the festival and its 4/20 of course when you're here, and you want to get into the mood, the vibe. Is Brant Bjork gonna be the guy that puff-puff-passes outside with the people? Are you gonna vape in the green room with the bands? Or are you gonna seek out some edibles from that girl you keep hearing about who has the really rad cookies? What's your choice?

BB: Ha-ha. Well, I mean to be perfectly honest I'm not the most social guy. I enjoy meeting people, especially if I share energy and a vibe with them and a mindset. I'm all about you know, socializing and getting to know people. But you know I can't honestly say. But I do feel comfortable with the Canadian people in general. I've always found Canadians to be easy to talk to, so I anticipate meeting nice people and there being a very positive vibe. But we'll see man, you know? I'm not much of a social smoker to be honest. I have more of a medicinal relationship with marijuana. Drinking, to be perfectly honest, that's probably more the thing that allows me to socialize with people is to have a beer or a cocktail and get that thing going. But for me, my relationship with cannabis is, even when I was younger, before I even really knew that, it was more of a medicinal situation. I think it's perfectly OK for it to be recreational and be something that's part of a social atmosphere or even a celebration. But it's also important that people respect it as something that's very much a part of our mental health and physical health.

CC: I couldn't agree more, Brant. Let's get back to the music before we get you out of here. What are you listening to right now? What's something that's really making your vibe feel good when you're listening to tunes?

BB: Oh gosh, when I'm at home I listen to a lot of jazz. A lot of Coltrane and Miles. You know, Thelonius Monk and Art Blakey and stuff like that. Jazz is just a genre of music that, you know, for years that's just been my go-to. You know even when I'm driving around town here in LA, I've always got the K-Jazz public radio jazz station on. That's pretty much what I mostly listen to.

CC: Cool, I like it. You know, I used to play in a band and when we'd play for three hours a night. To go home that's what I had to listen to just to calm down and chill out because I could not go to sleep after playing rock n roll for three hours, you know?

BB: Yeah, yeah. I love playing rock and I'm a rocker, man. I definitely grew up with the rock, and I'm grateful and very proud to be part of the rock scene. But um, I've got rock records on my turntable all the time, but mostly jazz!

CC: Awesome. So, how about this, you talk about jazz but is there anything like in your musical skeleton closet that people would be surprised to know that something you're down with?

BB: You know to be honest I love the Byrds. The Byrds are one of my favourite bands. So I listen to the Byrds quite a bit, and I don't know, that just seems to me like maybe that's a band that people wouldn't assume that I really enjoy. But I love the Byrds.

CC: Alright Brant before I get you out of here, thanks again for chillin' out with us today. I really appreciate it. We are really stoked to have you come up to the festival and experience it and really make it happen. You talk about how you're not a DJ, you're more of a selector and I really like that idea. It makes me even more excited to see and hear what's gonna happen when you come up. I think it's gonna be pretty cool and unique. But all that aside, man what is the best thing about being Brant Bjork?

BB: What's the best thing about being Brant Bjork? Man, that's kind of a crazy question. Well, the best thing about being Brant Bjork, I'm alive, I'm healthy, I live in a country where I'm able to pursue my dreams, and I've got a family to help me do that.

CC: That's awesome man. That's the kind of shit I like to hear when I ask that question.

BB: Rad.

You can listen to this full interview and much more on CC Getty's Metalheads United podcast at www.Mixcloud.com/CCGetty

www.brantbjork.net/

PHOTO SOURCE: Heavy Psych Sounds Records





Phil Campbell & The Bastard Sons

The Age of Absurdity

Interview with vocalist Neil Starr and guitarist Todd Campbell
By Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: This band is like a family affair, with the three sons and Phil Campbell, your dad. It's very unique. How did the band form?
Neil Starr: We got together about or five years ago to play some songs at my birthday party, which was pretty cool. We did some covers, then we decided to keep playing and called ourselves the All-Star Band at the time. In 2016, we changed the name to Phil Campbell and The Bastard Sons

at Wacken Open Air Festival.
AU: Did you always feel encouraged to play music?
Todd Campbell: By our parents? Yeah! I think they were always happy for us to do whatever we enjoyed as kids. My dad gave me a miniature Flying V when I was four or five years old. I used to listen to Motorhead records when I was really young and he used to take us to concerts. So it was a really cool environment



to grow up in.
AU: So are you actually bastards or do you know who your mom is?
TC: No, no! We're all a family, so same mother, Neil Starr is just a good friend of ours.
AU: Neil, how did you find yourself with this crew?
NS: Well, they offered me a Lamborghini and a suitcase full of money. Yeah! A toy Lamborghini and some monopoly money. Me and Todd had a game of Monopoly and he won so, the forfeit was to join his band.
AU: Do you come up with most of the lyrical content?
NS: Yeah, that's the cool thing for me is that Phil and the rest of the boys have kinda said I can come up with my own ideas for melodies and for lyrics and when I present stuff to them and if

there is any changes they want to make we can talk about them and try to make the song sound as best as it can.
AU: Are you trying to channel Lemmy at all into this project?
NS: Not at all! Motorhead is Motorhead and this is a completely separate band. I think it would be, you know, quite disrespectful if I was to try and copy what he did. He was a unique person, he was a unique singer with an incredible tone. I've got my own sort of style of how I like to sing and I think it's better as a singer if you do your own thing.
AU: Were you in some other bands before?
NS: The band that Todd and I were in was called Dopamine. I was in a band called Attack Attack as well, the UK one not the US one! Todd was in a band called Straight Lines.
AU: How was the response at Wacken when you played?
NS: Kinda nerve-wracking, no one really knew what to expect. We headlined the first day and everything's really snowballed from that point and now the album's coming out on Nuclear Blast.
AU: What can you tell us about the album The Age of Absurdity? Any stand-out tracks?
NS: I guess the listeners will choose, but I like a bluesy one we do which is different for us called "Dark Days." The lyrics are sort of a cool summary of the whole album. There is another cool, slow one at the end, called "Into The Dark."
AU: And you're doing a Hawkwind cover song for Silver Machine, is that one Lemmy wrote?
NS: Yes, he sang on that song. We played a few shows with Hawkwind – some of the first shows we did after Lemmy died. He used to play the song with Motorhead for years and he really enjoyed playing it so it's been in our set for a while.
AU: Who parties harder, Todd... You or your dad?
TC: Tyla Campbell!! The bass player wins that one.
AU: Do the wild sex orgies get awkward with

all your family members?
NS: Ohhhh god... it's been a while since that's happened, mate. We all just watch films in the back in our pajamas and slippers.
AU: Any advice for guitar players just starting out?
TC: Keep practicing. Learn songs you love and just do it for fun. Join a band and have a good time. Don't take things too seriously. If you just go in dire then there's pretty much no point in doing it is there? I think there's probably millionaire rockstars who are more miserable than people jamming in their garage.
AU: Any Uncle Lemmy stories you could share with us?
TC: He used to offer to help me with my history lessons when I was a kid. So yeah, he was a bit like an uncle in that sort of respect which is really cool. I guess people wouldn't see him in that sort of sense. But he was always supportive which was cool growing up.

AU: What did you guys want to get across with this album?
NS: We just wanted to write good music. We didn't really have a specific genre, style, or statement. We wanted them to be the best songs they could be so we didn't put any boundaries. We're really pleased with how it all came out and one thing we did want to do was make sure we didn't compromise any part of it.
AU: And why is it called the The Age of Absurdity. Does it have to do with Trump?
NS: We didn't choose the title because of anything to do with Trump specifically but he is a small piece of a crazy world we live in for sure.
AU: Final words for Canadian fans?
NS: Thanks for checking out the album! We hope we can get out to your country soon!
www.philcampbell.net/

PHOTO SOURCE: Philcampbell.net

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subculture

By *wendythirteen*



The Golden Rule. It crosses the boundaries with different wording in many religions. Yet the message is the same. My personal tenet is 'Do what you will, but harm ye none.' That's the Wiccan tenet.

As most of you know I don't mince words, especially on Facebook. It's got me 'unfriended' more times than I can count. But fuck it.

Sometimes you need to stand up to abhorrent behaviours in the scene. That task kind of falls on the elders in any subculture. It's time people stop ignoring abusive antics. Like it or not, there needs to be a moral code in the world and it starts with you. Bullshit thrives if everyone chooses to be a bystander and never call shit out unless it directly affects you.

When you become aware of better humanitarian ideas, how hard is it to implement them in your life? I'm sick of people hurling homophobic or abusive slurs at others. How is that endearment or a sign of friendship. I once asked a seemingly 'woken' lady I respect about referring to her friends as bitches and she said she was reclaiming the word 'bitch'. I still shake my head with that one. Why would you want to, when it has a derogatory connotation.

Integrity.

Is integrity only convenient when it enters your sphere? I think the world is at an all-time high with shoulder shrugging apologists. It is gutwrenching to see people turning a blind eye to despicable people and behaviours.

Witnessing members of the cliquy black metal scene that are claiming a pedophile is evil, thus acceptable, if you are true kvlt. Absurd. The quip 'Whatever floats your boat' needs to be sunk.

This guy enjoyed jacking off to such disgusting fodder as a baby girl being raped during a diaper change.

How is that cool and at what lengths do you dismiss heinous character flaws to belong to a group? I have never seen such a steaming pile of shit written on Facebook like this mushy adoration of a twisted fuck. I covered that bands

patch with duct tape because my vest is too disintegrated to remove it. It's bad enough that this genre is sadly riddled with racists, but to brush off pedophilia. fucking gross.

Hypocrisy.

Then we have the aging yupster rock club ignoring the fact that an alleged, unrepentant rapist has reformed center stage in his perverse realm. Some of the same people flocking to their week long performance stand were just making huge proclamations on Facebook in recent weeks about similarly inclined assholes. But hey. Nothing like a guest starring spot at the big show to silence that loud mouth of selective injustice. It sure is a world of gutless bystanders. We are talking people in their 50s here. Older not wiser it seems; a disappointing example of cowardice.

Courage.

To you people sharing shitty info-memes, attacking or making fun of the youth survivors of a mass school shooting. What could they have done wrong in their 17 years alive that would warrant you victim-blaming them? Ridiculous. Think about your last 17 years. Would you deserve attempted murder? Empathy is dead. Is it an attempt to downplay the fact that they are victims of horror or spouting off about gun rights. What the fuck are you thinking? There has to be common ground. Armed licenced citizens, sure. With weapons of war, no fucking way. That shit needs an overhaul immediately.

Depression.

The world lost a really hardworking little love bug this week to suicide. I'm not sure of the details but I'm sure alcohol and rash solutions made while imbibing took her beyond the point of coming back. She had posted late at night on social media asking for suicide prevention access and then medical attention. Sadly it was too late. I'm sorry Genevieve that no one got to you in time.

Please take care of yourselves people. Booze is a depressant and the harbinger of poor decisions. It is the ultimate tool for fooling yourself with bogus happiness. When the night of 'partytimes' is done and you're left alone with your bottle, chances are high that a deep sadness creeps back. We will miss your spunk little one. R.I.P.

Accolades.

Congrats to Ancients on winning a Juno. It's amazing to see local, authentic metal getting some attention in the mainstream musical world. Sending love to Archspire also, for being nominated, and the boys in Striker. Makes you wonder if someone with some underground

inclinations was actually on the Juno nomination committee this year.

Nostalgia.

A hundred and sixty people swarm Pats Pub for a Harry Potter Trivia Night. What. The. Fuck. Most nights it's like pulling teeth to get people to show up to see incredible live original music of any genre. Maybe I need to start booking bands with television and movie themes to pack the millenials in. Truly strange times. Adapt or die? Nah. Retiring is imminent with this ridiculous Hollywood focused brain lust. Things that make you shake your head with a deep sigh. I guess the 'Kill your TV' concept was itself killed when you introduced your spawn to the new allegiance of tech.

Shout out to the door peeps in the scene. Man, it's eye opening the shit you deal with, but that's a column in itself. XOXO

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Shallow End

Interview by Michael Luis

In the age of endless internet-fueled punk and metal micro-genres, Victoria quartet Shallow End keeps it simple. Their slugging riffs, bashing drums, and barked vocals aren't anything a hardcore fan hasn't heard before, but that's not the point. Vocalist David Goertzen, guitarist James Martyn, bassist Simon Millington, and drummer Clayton Basi combine to throw a show that is a no-nonsense blur of brutal fun, so put on your favourite Rotting Out long-sleeve and throw some spin kicks. *Absolute Underground's* Michael Luis spoke to guitarist James Martyn and vocalist David Goertzen in their hometown.

Absolute Underground: First things first. When did Shallow End start? How did everything come together?

David Goertzen: Simon's parents went out of town last year for three weeks so we jammed a couple times a week and wrote the *Terrorizing The Jam* EP in those three weeks. Simon and I had played in a band together in the past and so did James and I, so it just made sense to all get together and start a project.

James Martyn: Dave and I were involved in another project that we were slowly losing steam on. We both came from a background of playing

heavier music, and the project was a departure from anything either of us had been involved with in the past. We were both ready to make something heavy again and that's when we decided to jam with Simon and Mike, our original drummer. Simon and I were in a past project together, as were Dave and Mike, so there was a familiarity that really helped initially.

AU: Shallow End plays a very specific strand of hardcore. You guys have a cohesive sound. Was that a concerted effort?

JM: When we started the band, we were clear on wanting to make a grassroots hardcore project, but Simon and I both have pretty strong background in metal, and were well-practiced at writing music together from when we played in Villains. It didn't take long for us to fall into our old groove and the project quickly took on a heavier sound.

DG: Yeah, I'd definitely say the longer we write together, the more metal influences are showing through.

AU: Something I've also noticed is that you guys have a good sense of humour about your sound. On posters, you'll frequently be listed as like "meathead music" or "Neanderthal hardcore" and stuff. It's wonderfully self-deprecating.

JM: We like to think we have good senses of humour in general [laughs].

AU: I find a lot of hardcore bands take themselves way too seriously.

DG: Yeah totally. Plus, it doesn't hurt when you are making a lot of the posters and putting on a lot of your own shows. Making music is supposed to be fun and we are all generally pretty open-minded witty guys.

JM: Yeah there is something that feels odd about promoting yourself as something cool. We're just a bunch of dorks who have fun making music together.

DG: It's funny because none of us are alpha-male types, so it's kind of an ode to us playing tough music. It's ironic.

ML: What are the strongest and weakest parts of the Victoria punk/hardcore scene?

JM: Victoria as a city in general is a very open-minded and accepting place, and the punk scene, particularly the all-ages scene, follows that mentality 100%, which is definitely a big strength in my opinion.

DG: There aren't enough bands [laughs]. Not enough younger kids are playing hardcore and the old heads don't come to shows unless it's 19-plus. But the good side is definitely the mixed bills and the chance to play and convince people that hardcore is something they could get into or might like.

JM: Yeah it's tough, there is a definite separation between the bar scene and the all ages scene. A separation that I think is less prominent in Vancouver, for example. They have venues that can accommodate both and that is harder to find in Victoria.

DG: Shout out to Subculture Club for really helping this scene out.

JM: Yeah the SCC has been and will continue to be a huge boon for the scene here.

DG: Lack of venues is definitely a downside. All hail house shows.

JM: Big ups to Cole Lamb and Kim Wilson for their contributions in that department as well. Some of the best shows in the last few years have been at their residences.

AU: What's next for Shallow End?

JM: Well we've got about eight new songs written and counting so we're thinking it's almost time to start recording again

DG: We're just trying to push as hard as we can

with the time and resources we have available. We are all getting older, so it's tough with full-time work and school. But we are making moves.

AU: What are some other bands that people should be checking out from Victoria or anywhere else? Don't feel the need to keep it to punk/heavy stuff.

DG: Charm from Victoria are sick up-and-comers. We just got to play some shows with our friends in Feeding and Slumlord and they were both rad. Our homies in No Liars just released a new record.

JM: Gulfer is a sweet punk/emo band from Montreal and just put out a sick new record called *Dog Bless*. We also just played a house show with a band called The October Crisis who I had never heard of but apparently has been a band forever. They were insane.

AU: October Crisis were a band from like 2007-2010, maybe. But they played reunion shows in 2016, and then the other night.

JM: Well I hope they are making a comeback

DG: Harry (Siegel, guitarist) is incredibly talented. I loved seeing them.

AU: Anything else you'd like to add?

DG: SUPPORT DIY PUNK HARDCORE! START BANDS! ACAB!

JM: Do what makes you happy and make sure you're laughing every step of the way.

DG: Watch *Friends*.

JM: Mine was cheesy. Let's change it to something about bagel bites.

AU: Can do.

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Sasquatch

*Interview with bassist Jason Casanova
By Erik Lindholm*

Absolute Underground: I say, good day sirs! Where are y'all now?

Jason Casanova: Deep in the middle of nowhere (somewhere between Reno and Las Vegas).

AU: What does the room you're in look like, what is the last thing you drank?

JC: I am typing this questionnaire from the back of a big tin can (our van doesn't have any windows). And I just had a nice cappuccino. Thanks for asking. Riggs and Keith are currently drowning in H2O. We are all a bit parched from the previous evening's activities in Hot Vegas. (Jack and Coke was not on our good side this morning. Definitely not a team player).

AU: The cover of your latest album has a jet fighter pilot flying in a cockpit. What is your favourite combat aircraft of all time? Any era is up for grabs, Maverick.

JC: Great, now you have Keith telling us all kinds of stories of how he wanted to be a fighter pilot. He won't shut up. Apparently Stuka JU-87 (?) is his favourite. It sounds like a bird virus. Anyway, I am learning that apparently Keith is a big fan of German engineering when it comes to planes. Riggs says Red Baron. I have no background or historical knowledge of planes, but I do have a soft heart for Goose in Top Gun. Does that help clear things up?

AU: You're on our radar due to headlining 420 Festival in Calgary, your first trip to Canada. What are your expectations about visiting the north?

JC: Riggs has visited previously, such a world traveler. He is looking forward to flying in, breaking a limb and having it fixed for free though. I, on the other hand, am really looking forward to seeing if Canadian bacon is really a thing or if it's just a ham in disguise. Have I been duped by an American marketing ploy all of these years?

AU: What effect do you think Black Sabbath closing doors of their shop has on rock n' roll?

JC: Ah Sabbath. They will forever be in hearts and our riffs, but it is the right call to stick a fork in it. You can only prop Ozzy up on stage for so long. Retirement is an ok thing in my book.

AU: Tell us your favourite aspect of playing the Psycho Las Vegas 2017 show... that was a tasty lineup and venue, which we all wanted to attend.

JC: For the first time, we have a festival that feels like we are playing in Europe. Everything from the diversity of the lineup to the venue, it's great to have something like this here in the States. Evan (the founder) has definitely nailed it.

Also, if you've been to the Hard Rock under normal circumstances, the people frequenting the casino do not necessarily prescribe to our brand of rock and roll religion. Quite the opposite actually. Especially that god awful Rehab pool party that happens every weekend. Therefore, it is great to see the whole casino be taken over by us dirtbags. All the black shirts, the long hair...it's all happening. A+ rating.

AU: You guys rock hard, you have hooks and memorable choruses and lines... what do you think makes your music resonate with fans?

JC: The ten or so people that sent us letters over the past 15 years say Keith has a nice smile. I, for one, think that's bullshit. The marketing research reveals that his keen vision of goatee choices resonates much higher with our base.

AU: What do you guys get up to when not touring and recording? You've been running as a band for many years.

JC: The three of us all do have day jobs to pay off band debt and live life.

Riggs owns a recording studio in Boston (Mad Oak Recording Studios...consequently the same place we've done our last four records) and he roasts coffee as well (under the same moniker... Mad Oak Coffee).

Keith is a seasoned logistics courier associate (ie. FedEx driver) and part-time shit talker (only on the weekends).

I moonlight as a cartographer for a small environmental non-profit.

AU: Being based in Los Angeles, how does it colour the sound of your music?

JC: At the moment, I am the only one actually residing in LA. Riggs has been a long-time resident of Boston. While Keith was in LA for many years, he has been in Philly (at least the past three months). Because we are both transplants, I'm not sure if the city has done anything to steer the songs though. You'd think the sun and fun would make us write happy jingles that we could sell to a carpet company or something. Such is not the case. "Drown All The Evidence" isn't getting us that Folgers deal anytime soon, that's for sure.

AU: What car do you drive, and why?

JC: I got a Volvo V70 T5 for sake of reference - cause it's speedy, safe, and maybe if your eyesight is bad - sexy - all at once.

I have a beat-up white cargo van. What can I say. It's no chick magnet, but it is quite utilitarian (we need something to move gear). It also looks like I should be handing out candy to school children.

Riggs is the fancy boy with his Audi something or rather. (NOTE: My knowledge of cars matches my vast knowledge of fighter planes).

Keith leans toward the realm of public transit and the borrowing of vehicles at the moment. (ie, his piece of crap died in the summer last year).

AU: If you had to visit one place in America for the music scene... where would you go and why?

JC: Music scene? I don't know this term you speak of. I choose Germany because Black Mood is the happiest band on earth. And Berlin, in particular, because our friends at Wild At Heart know how to show a gal a good time.

AU: Last words to hard rockers up in Canada:

JC: We know it's a school night, but it would be nice to see some of your faces on April 19th. A happy promoter means a happy band, and vice-versa. We will be hosting a dunk tank and hot dog eating contest out in the parking lot to drum up interest from passers-by. Do try to make it out.

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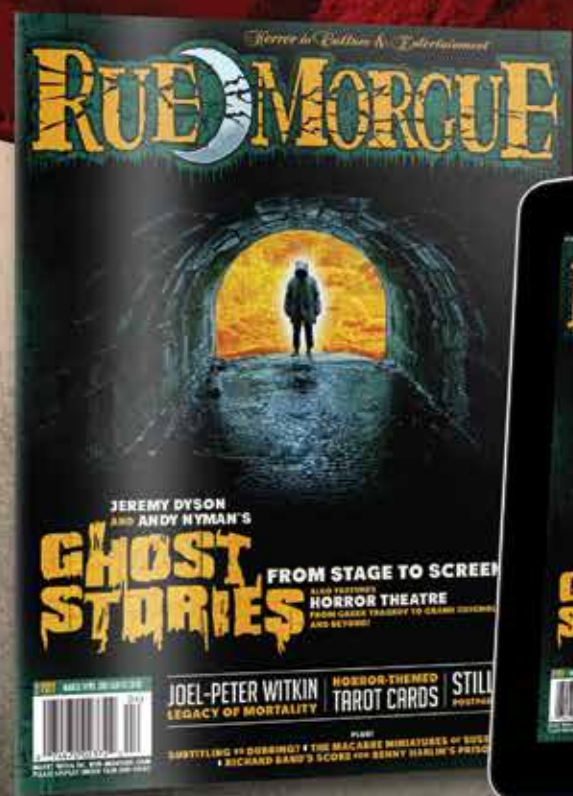
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Burn The Priest

Legion: XX

Interview with lead guitarist Mark Morton
By Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

Mark Morton: My name is Mark Morton and I am one of the guitar players for Lamb of God.

AU: You guys were originally called “Burn the Priest”?

MM: We were originally called Burn the Priest, and we are revisiting that.

AU: Why release a cover album now?

MM: It's the 20th year anniversary of our first Burn

the Priest album and we've really never done covers in an official recorded release sense. So it seemed like a great way to celebrate two decades of us doing what we do.

AU: What was your favourite story that came out of the recording process?

MM: We did a cover of a song called “Jesus Built My Hotrod” by a band called Ministry, they did the song back in the 90s. And we weren't initially planning on covering that at all. I was in my studio with our producer, Josh, and we finished up early that evening and we were kinda like, “Let's do something, let's mess with something since we're here!” and Josh suggested we see what it would sound like to cover “Jesus Built My Hotrod.” And within about 30-45 minutes we had kind of a rough demo of it up and it sounded awesome. It's one of my favourites on the album actually.

AU: Which song would you rather cover? Dire Straits’ “Money for Nothing,” or ZZ Top, “Sharp Dressed Man,” and why?

MM: That's a tough one because I would say ZZ Top for sure! Except that era of ZZ Top is not really my favourite era. Maybe like, “Just Got Paid,” or “Blue Jeans Blues,” instead.

AU: What's the most awe-inspiring place you've visited in the last couple years?

MM: I have been fortunate enough to spend some time lately on Grand Cayman Island. I've been doing a fair amount of work down there, as of late, and now so that's one of my favourite places on the planet Earth.

AU: Are you guys pretty stoked to be heading out with Slayer on their final tour?

MM: Yes, Slayer is one of those bands that has that kind of longevity that we aspire to.

They have the kind of legacy that I can only hope to have a tiny little, little speck of after my career is done. They're just legendary, their body of work is super impressive, super consistent, super quality.

They always put on a killer show. They're just super pro, a band we look up to, for sure. To be given the opportunity to do their whole farewell tour as direct support was a no-brainer for us.

AU: Advice to new guitar players out there? How can they find a distinctive sound as well?

MM: First and foremost, don't try to copy anyone else. It's cool to have influences but I would say don't try and play just like somebody else. And don't limit your influences, in respect of like, only having one kind of sound or one kind of genre that you pay attention to. The more diverse your influences, the more diverse your playing style is gonna be and the more character you're gonna have in your playing. I would rather someone to be able to listen to me play and recognize it as me, than necessarily be the fastest guy.

AU: What do you look forward to when you come up and play shows in Canada?

MM: The fans at the shows because, for whatever

reason, Lamb of God is just huge in Canada. We've been blessed with success kind of all over the world, but Canada is for sure one of our biggest, most successful markets. We've had two gold records there, two or three #1 debuts on Billboard charts and the shows there are as big, or bigger than, anywhere else in the world.

AU: What do you get up to when you're not touring or recording?

MM: I'm a father, so I spend a lot of time with my daughter.

AU: What do you figure is the problem facing America that deserves our attention?

MM: I wish I had that answer, there are so many distressing things. My opinion is that the current administration here is obviously just a symptom of a greater problem, because we had eight years or so where everything was really hunky-dory. But obviously, there was some sort of issue bubbling under the surface that reared its ugly head here a year ago. I can only hope that the damage done is repairable.

AU: I know this is a heartbreaking one, but could you tell us the story behind the song “Embers”?

MM: I wrote an essay about that. “Embers” is about the death of my first daughter. So yeah, that's a sad song. And it's actually just as much about her mother and I, kind of surviving that and moving forward from that. When I write lyrics, they tend to be very personal, so you could kind of go through Lamb of God's discography and probably learn a lot of horrible things about me just based on some of the lyrics I've written. That was a very traumatic time and I really put a lot of my personal life and a lot of myself into the lyrics that I write, it's just part of my kind of process, it's a catharsis for me, part of my therapy.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans looking forward to seeing you on this tour with Slayer.

MM: Thanks for the years of support and we look forward to seeing y'all soon.

www.lamb-of-god.com

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Ross “The Boss” Friedman

By Blood Sworn

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Ross The Boss: I'm most infamous for making this band Manowar up.

AU: I'm a real big fan of The Dictators, as well.

RTB: That too. Thank you!

AU: Is it even possible to list all of the bands you've been a part of?

RTB: Yeah, there aren't that many: Dictators, Manowar, Shakin' Street, Brain Surgeons, Death Dealer, HeyDay, The Spinatras, and the new RTB band, which is the best right now!

AU: How did you find all of the guys in the Ross the Boss band?

RTB: I needed a tremendous vocalist, and I saw Marc playing and I noticed how great he was, so I called him up and said, "Wanna play?" He was interested, so he became vocalist. Mike Lepond on bass, what can I say? Not many bass players better than him, he plays in Symphony X, and Mike Lepond's *Silent Assassins*, his new record is out now. I just couldn't believe how great he was, he knew all the Manowar tunes on four and eight string bass. I had my nephew Lance play drums on the new record, and now that Lance is not on the road with us, I have Steve Bolognese from Here to Eternity, and Death Dealer. Just the four of us now, and we're just a wrecking machine. Absolutely a wrecking machine.

AU: You're just about to drop a new album here in April, *By Blood Sworn*?

RTB: Yep, absolutely. *By Blood Sworn* will be out on April 20th through AMFM Soulfood Records Germany. Judging by the reaction so far, it's been amazing. We're happy, I'm sure everyone is going to really love the record. So, we'll have to find out!

AU: When did you first pick up a guitar?

RTB: When I was 13. I was quite influenced by the Beatles and The Rolling Stones of course, that backdates me but... actually when I first heard B.B. King and Muddy Waters, that's what really influenced me to play.

AU: How did the formation of The Dictators come about?

RTB: We started in college in upstate New York in '73, and by '74 we were in the city, the band had formed and we had a record contract with Columbia.

AU: You guys actually had the first signed punk record. It was a year before The Ramones, and two years before The Sex Pistols.

RTB: Absolutely, we pre-date both those bands. Actually the only three bands that had record contracts in New York were KISS, The Dictators, and the New York Dolls.

AU: What was life in The Dictators like?

RTB: We were a bunch of sarcastic, obnoxious teenagers and we really had fun back in the day. We really couldn't give a shit about anything because of the songs we sung about. We just made mayhem everywhere we went, and everywhere that Handsome Dick Manitoba sang,

people would just love the fucking guy, or they'd hate him with a passion, like wanting to kill him.

AU: So you were there are the very start of CBGBs?

RTB: Yeah, pretty much. Patti Smith found it with Richard Hell and Tom Verlaine of Television. Those guys found the

friends with Joey, and we stoked the plan, and we stuck to it, and that band is called Manowar. It's pretty big still, really pretty big.

AU: For the inspiration for wearing fur and leather, did you guys know about the Canadian guy, Thor?

RTB: Yeah, we knew about him. He's a cool guy. Actually we were more influenced by Conan The Barbarian, Arnold Schwarzenegger's movies. The reason we went in that direction was that we didn't want to be Judas Priest, Iron Maiden - black leather and studs, that look was pretty cool but we wanted something more different, more animalistic, so we found that. That wasn't our look for very long, that was just in the beginning.

AU: Did it help attract the ladies wearing the cheetah print?

RTB: Amazingly yeah! I never wore that stuff, if you look at the pictures it wasn't me. That look didn't hold up very well, it didn't age well. I kept my pants on thankfully.

AU: You also formed a supergroup call Death Dealer?

RTB: Yeah, just recently in 2013 and 2015. We have two records out. I did Death Dealer, Manitoba's Wild Kingdom (that's The Dictators), Brain Surgeons, I had a blues rock band The Spinatras that was kind of like Ramones meets Cheap Trick. That led me to starting the Ross band. I have two solo records, 2008's *New Metal Leader*, 2010's *Hailstorm* and now there is a new record coming April

20th AMFM Soulfood featuring the great Marc Lopes on vocals.

AU: Any plans to tour Canada?

RTB: We are doing Toronto, and Montreal and maybe we will play May or June, on the West



place and they started having bands there. It was a shithole, but it was our shithole. Hilly's dog was just shitting everywhere, and it was just amazing. But the crowds started coming in, and he made improvements to the place and the scene just took off like nobody's business.

AU: And you guys were also there playing the final weekend of CBGBs?

RTB: Yeah, after all those years, all the decades of rock, Hilly couldn't keep it open, they had raised his rent so we played the final weekend. We had played CBGBs 35 times, and we played the final weekend of the building. We played Friday and Saturday, and then Patti Smith played Sunday night but she's not really punk rock, so we played the last rock concert there.

AU: Will you still tour with The Dictators in the future?

RTB: We did our last tour in the fall with The Dictators NYC and I think that version of the band won't tour again. But you never know, I never say never to anything. Right now it's all about Ross The Boss band, that's all I care about right now.

AU: On your new record are there any stand-out tracks you want to mention?

RTB: "By Blood Sworn," "Among The Bones," "This is Vengeance," "Devil's Day," "Faith of the Fallen," all amazing songs.

AU: And you did a reworking of some Manowar songs?

RTB: We picked three new Manowar songs, well old but reworked, "Each Dawn I Die," "The Oath," and "Hail and Kill."

AU: How did you go from being in The Dictators to forming one of the most crazy over the top metal bands?

RTB: That's a good question, people want to know that. I didn't do it on purpose. I didn't mean for it to be such a stark opposite thing, but it was. I always play heavy guitar, my guitar work has been a part of both bands, part of both genres of music, part of American punk and part of power metal. Well, it invented power metal, so I don't know. It wasn't on purpose, and it wasn't done to turn anyone off.

AU: It was Ronny James Dio who turned you onto Joey DeMiao?

RTB: That's right on tour! He said, "Go meet my friend," I go, "Okay," and we became friends. I was on tour with Shakin' Street and we opened a show for Black Sabbath's *Heaven and Hell*, and I became

Coast.

AU: What was it like being inducted into the Hall of Heavy Metal History

RTB: A great honour, a great honour. I'll never forget that day. With so many great guys, Randy Rhoads, Don Airey, and the owner of the of the Rainbow. That was a great time for me, to be on the first ballot too!

AU: What's your motivation to keep making music?

RTB: I have this burning fire in my stomach, and I'm not going to quit until I die. This is part of me that just has to go, I'm just driven.

AU: What does the future hold?

RTB: More Ross The Boss records, more touring, more gigs. We're working on a video for *By Blood Sworn*.

AU: They should make a documentary about you.

RTB: Well, I'm going to do a book soon. I've seen a lot.

AU: You dubbed the term "True Metal" for Manowar. What was the core value for Manowar?

RTB: It's just the way we conducted ourselves in the world. You know, loyalty and honour. It's being true to yourself more than anything. I think that's what people get from Manowar's music. It gives them courage, because a lot of people come to me and they go, "I went through some bad times, your music kept me going." A lot of soldiers say, "Your music inspired us on the battlefield, kept us going."

AU: What is the difference between the Punk world and the Metal world?

RTB: Manowar was louder! Punk was more snotty, more "fuck you."

AU: Anything else you'd like to promote?

RTB: Yeah, *By Blood Sworn*! Get it! You will be amazed. You will not regret it.

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Bret "The Hitman" Hart

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who do you think is the best new up-and-comer?

Bret Hart: I think AJ Styles, Kevin Owens, Sami Zayn. I like all the Canadian guys. There are a lot of really good lady wrestlers, they're starting to become more exciting than the guys, but those are the three that come to mind the most right now.

AU: What inspired you to be in wrestling?

BH: I grew up in wrestling, everything was wrestling. Stampede Wrestling. My brothers were wrestling, everything was wrestling. Every single day that I can remember waking up, it was about wrestling. When I was in high school, I kind of swore off it, that I would never be a wrestler and that I didn't want to get into wrestling. The wrestlers in that time period weren't very good. They were slow and kind of did the same old stuff that the wrestlers of the generation before were doing. I lost interest and my friends would tease me and say I'd end up being a wrestler and I'd reply with, "I'll never be a wrestler."

Somewhere about 20 years old, I started to look at wrestling again in a different light. I was having trouble trying to figure out what I was doing with my life. I wanted to travel. I wanted to go back to school. I wanted to make some money and I wanted to meet girls. And in the end, wrestling was the ticket for me. It was a great way to stay in shape. You have to stay in pretty good shape to be a wrestler. Had a lot of fun. I had much more fun travelling around with the wrestlers than I would on coffee breaks on construction sites.

When I did get into wrestling, it wasn't very popular, like it was a few years later. But I do recall telling myself at a very young age that I didn't just want to be a wrestler, I wanted to be the best wrestler.

AU: What was the most memorable match in

your history?

BH: I kind of have three favourites. The match I had with Steve Austin in Wrestlemania 13 was probably my favourite match.

Every once in a while, Steve Austin will call me from on a treadmill somewhere saying, "I'm watching the match right now! It was the best match I ever had." It was a really fun, action packed match.

I also have to give honourable mention to the "Iron Man" match I had with Shawn Michaels. It was such a good match and Shawn was a great wrestler, he really was, and he was really together that day. Shawn showed up in Anaheim for Wrestlemania 12, I think, to run circles around me. If you really know the backstory behind all of what was going on, they gave Shawn nothing but time off to get ready for this "Iron Man" match.

He had been injured. My brother Owen did some move to him and he had to be taken out on a stretcher. I heard a lot of talk he was seriously hurt. He just went home for about four months and trained for this one match and then me on the other hand, they just ran me into the ground right up to Wrestlemania. They wanted Shawn to run circles around me and show that he was going to be the new kid on the block. Show that the torch had been passed. I was determined to not let that happen. The match was great, if you remember it. It was two wrestlers in their prime who basically were trying to outshine each other for 60 minutes. That was one of the hardest matches I've ever had. We both gave 100% and it's a testament to the match itself.

My last one would be The British Bulldog at Wembley Stadium. Not because of the beauty of the match itself but to go over to England to wrestle at Wembley in an open-air soccer stadium for 82,000 people. I actually think it involved where I said that I was more popular than the Bulldog in England. We were on last and I never really thought about it until we walked out but there was a lot of interest, you know Bret Hart versus The Bulldog, this was going to be a really good match. You know you have a great match when you walk out and none of the fans know



who's going to win.

AU: What's your problem with smashing the announcers table?

BH: I always make this boast. I say, "I'm the best there is, the best there was, and the best there ever will be," and I can say that boast quite honestly because I've never injured one

wrestler in my whole career. I was always very safe and professional in doing my job.

If you watch that match where I won the title a third time in Washington at the Survivor Series, when I went crashing through that table, I wiped out that poor Spanish announcer. I totally blew his knee out. I remember lying on the mat and they're going "Get a stretcher," and I'm like, "I don't need a stretcher," and they're like, "No, it's not for you, it's for the other guys." So I have hurt the announcers, more than one. Unfortunately.

AU: Would you consider going back into the WWE organization?

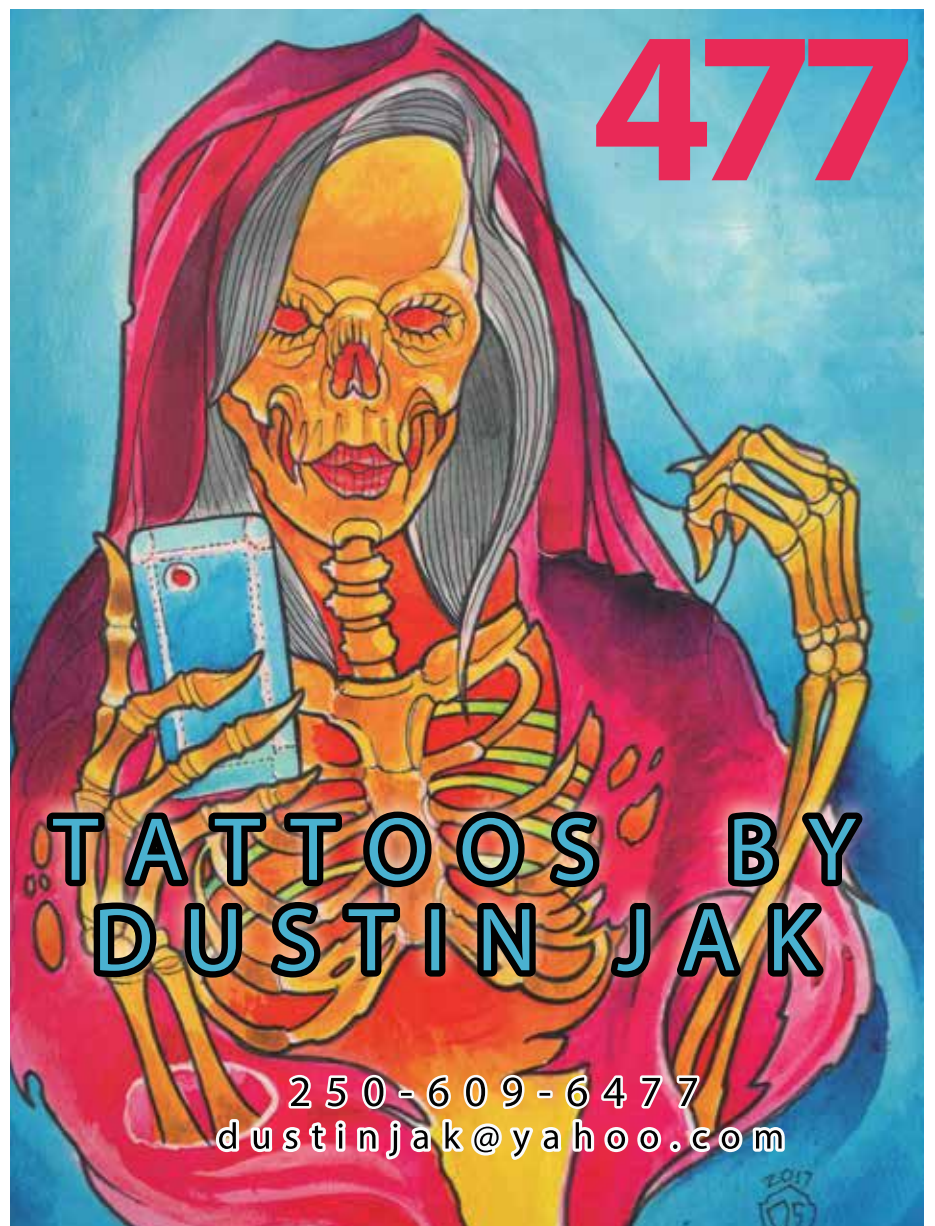
BH: I've thought about it. I wouldn't be opposed to it but I think we've reached a stalemate. A few years ago they called me up and wanted me to

wrestle for the US title in Toronto. This was after my concussion and my career was over. I was kind of thinking about it, like what else have I got better to do this week than wrestle for the US title in Toronto? They wanted me to go to the Raw 25 Year Anniversary recently and I just had some surgery on my wrist around that time so it just wasn't something I could manage.

AU: Your podcast. What happened there?

BH: It was fun to do and I was pretty candid. I think that's what started some problems, when you start being honest about wrestling you start hurting a lot of feelings. I made some mention that Michael Hayes of The Freebirds and all The Freebirds were serious alcoholics. They could barely get in the ring and barely get out of the ring and they got inducted into the Hall Of Fame. How does that work? Demolition, The Hart Foundation and The British Bulldogs, all real tag teams who were all real champions for lengths of time were excluded from the Hall Of Fame. I don't have any problem with anybody getting inducted into the Hall Of Fame but I think they have a responsibility to the people who really did the work. My brother Owen is another one who should be included in there.

www.brethart.com





Calgary Horror Convention

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what are you most infamous for?

Dan Doherty: Hi everybody, it's Dan Doherty and I started this little genre show called the Calgary Horror Con back in 2010.

AU: Why did you first start the Calgary Horror Convention?

DD: I have been a horror fan since I was a child and always wanted to work within the genre film industry. It wasn't until about eight years ago that I set out to do the convention when my current career was unstable and uncertain. I figured if I was poor, I would at least be happy.

AU: What sets your convention apart from others in Canada?

DD: You won't find cellphone companies, Internet service providers, banks or cable TV providers within the walls of the Calgary Horror Con. We're not corporate, I am the Calgary Horror Con, and my blood, sweat and tears went into building this show. I have over 100 vendors that are my family and most have grown with me. It is a more intimate setting, you get to meet and chat with guests without being shoved through a line by security. We have an above-industry level international film festival with over 1300 film submissions with many North American and Canadian premieres, and many of our top films have went onto gaining distribution. Our panels are moderated by industry professionals who are my friends. Although we are not quite where we want to be, you're guaranteed to feel a part of a great little community and you will have a blast. I have attendees that have stopped going to the big shows because they have a better experience at the Calgary Horror Con because we strive to show a good return on investment.

AU: Who are some of the guests you are bringing in this year?

DD: George P Wilbur (Michael Myers - *Halloween* 4 & 6) Ken Foree (*Dawn of the Dead*, *Devil's Rejects*, Rob Zombie's *Halloween*), James Remar (*Dexter*,

The Warriors), Danielle Harris (*Halloween 4*, *Hatchet III*), John Jarrat (*Wolf Creek I, II*), David Naughton (*An American Werewolf in London*), PJ Soles (*Halloween, Carrie*), CJ Graham (*Friday the 13th Part VI*), Daeg Faerch (Rob Zombie's *Halloween*) and Tiffany Shepis (*Tromeo & Julliet*, *Victor Crowley*).

AU: Tell us about the legendary bus trip you take the celebrity guests on.

DD: On the Friday before the show, the guests, industry professionals and my team go to the Canadian Rockies. Some of the past events were taking the Sulphur Mountain Gondola to get a panoramic view from top of a mountain, tour of the Cave and Basin, tour of the haunted Banff Springs Hotel, lunch at the Grizzly House and tour of Banff. It is my way of being a good host, showcasing my province and building a rapport with my guests as I normally would not have the opportunity during the convention. There are several spots available to purchase on the bus, however there is a prescreening process to ensure the safety of my guests.

AU: Is there a pre-party, VIP meet-and-greet planned again for this year? What bands are playing the event?

DD: This year we have a VIP party on the Friday night at Dickens Pub. The night includes Celebrity Meet and Greet, White Hat ceremony (Calgary's version of keys to the city but a hat symbolizing our Western hospitality), live performances by local performers hosted by Visha Loo (local performer, alternative/fetish model, promoter,

fashion designer) and for the second year in a row the band Strvngers will be performing. Strvngers is a dark, unforgiving, post-punk/darkwave, Canadian duo with an electronic seedy sound. Maria Joaquin and KC blend gothic undertones with catchy dance music to create a sonic-erotica of synths, guitar and EBM.

For the first time ever, we will also be having an after party on the Saturday night at the The Palomino Smokehouse and Social Club with the bands Urn (dark metal band out of Florida), Forsaken Rite (folk metal out of Edmonton) and SaKreD (progressive metal out of Saskatoon) performing.

AU: Any special surprise guests or talent attending/performing at this year's con?

DD: Keyboardist from the band Urn is the award winning prop maker Cleve Hall (*Monster Man*, *Troll*, *Big Ass Spider!*, *Two Headed Shark Attack*, *Evil Spawn*, *Ghoulies*, *Re-Animator*, *TerrorVision* and *The Sandlot*.) He will be taking a table as well as his band mates in Urn, who will have a separate table.

AU: What have been some of your challenges since starting the show?

DD: Starting the show in a changing economy, I was committed to the convention while my computer repair, comics and collectibles shop was struggling and since has closed the doors. I had no initial investment, no bank would touch me because I had no assets to recover if things went bad. I had no track record within the industry, with no guests willing to come, even if I had money to pay for it. Things have gotten a lot easier as far as booking guests because I have established trust with many in the community, I am a man of my word. Still, I am always trying to build a show hoping that I can generate enough money to cover the costs, on an event that the bulk of the money comes in the day of the show however I can't book flights on a promise and I can't hold a venue without a deposit.

Every year could be my last until I get over that



hump, meaning putting money in a bank account to invest into the next year's show. It has been a crazy ride, I have had people misrepresent themselves and people attach themselves to me. I had another convention steal a guest, go on the same weekend and when I said to them don't do it, or I am going to bury them (meaning their show), I ended up in court with a peace bond, on probation for a year and had to take a court-ordered Anger Management course. Sure, I played a part in it, I didn't think the phone call was the police to clarify what I meant by burying them.

Every year I have had to drop ticket prices to barely raise enough money to pay for a show and I am glad people take advantage of it or else there would be no show, however if people are not willing to pay the reasonably priced regular price the show is destined for failure. I don't have sponsors, I don't have investors, most my vendors are artists which means I have kept vendor tables affordable to them. I have definite growing pains, moving to a bigger space means doubling my vendors and if I don't double my attendees at that time, I screw my vendors who are my friends, in an already tough economy. Other failed shows put some of my vendors in tough economic times and even out of business. People have chatted about me doing fundraisers but the reality is, I have one, it is called the Calgary Horror Con. What is holding me back from the show I want is people and vendors waiting to pay for tables and tickets or waiting for a sale price. To date I have invested everything back into the show for eight years and we are getting there, but I still have two day jobs which if I was where I wanted to be, I would put a bigger focus on the show. If I ever had money, I would be dangerous, I have run this puppy on a strict budget and still manage to show a good return on investment for everyone involved except myself as we continue to reinvest. I am proud of what the Calgary Horror Con has accomplished, it is the largest horror convention in Canada, whereas several with deeper pockets have failed where I succeeded. The show continues to grow substantially each year.

It isn't a matter of taking the money, I have had offers, the show is worth a lot but it isn't worth anything to me if I go corporate with corporate sponsors who want to change me. People come for the vendors I have now, not to sign up for a cell phone. It will take the right company to work with me, I don't want to change anyone but the same holds true to me. I place value in honesty, integrity, loyalty, and decency, but being honest starts with being honest to myself. I don't want a G-rated show, the slashers I love don't fit into that, sure I have those areas at my show as I have children present but I am not going to drop horror films because they are too horrific or disturbing, I want the range from PG-13 and up.



AU: Who are some of the bigger names you've had attend your convention in the past.

DD: Doug Bradley (Pinhead - *Hellraiser*), Kane Hodder (Jason- *Friday the 13th Part VII, VIII, IX, X*), Dick Warlock (Michael Myers- *Halloween II*), John Kassir (Cryptkeeper- *Tales from the Crypt*), Bill Moseley (Ottis - *House of 1000 Corpses*, *The Devil's Rejects*), Tony Todd (*Candyman*), Jeffery Combs (Herbert West - *Re-Animator*), Linnea Quigley (*Return of the Living Dead, Night of the Demons*), Joe Turkel (Lloyd the bartender, *The Shining*), Tom Savini (Legendary SFX artist) and the list goes on.

AU: Any special events, panels, or screenings planned for this year's con?

DD: I am most excited for the film lineup this year as it keeps getting better and better as more film makers are finding us. We had over 1300 film submissions this year. Some of our top short picks include a film from Spain called "Space Trash Bag," out of

Switzerland, "Hitler's Balls," from the US "Croak," another film out of the US called "Heartless," and my favourite Lovecraft inspired film, Finland's "Sound From The Deep."

AU: When and where is this horror convention?

DD: June 2nd & 3rd, 2018

11:00 am - 7:00 pm daily at the Clarion Hotel, 2120 16 Ave NE, Calgary, AB

AU: Final words for Canadian horror fans.

DD: Get behind me and see where I take this, you won't be disappointed. The best thing you could do is tell a friend or bring a friend. Thanks to all that have allowed me to keep going into year eight, it has been a rough, crazy and fun ride. Big thanks to Ira, Chad and *Absolute Underground*, I am so glad we took this journey together, you guys rock!

www.horror-con.ca



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Bloodshot Dawn

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Josh McMorran: Hi there! I'm Josh McMorran, vocalist and guitar player in Bloodshot Dawn.

AU: Give us a brief band history, where are you based and what are you all about?

JM: The band was formed in 2003 with our first full length release out in 2012! We are a melodic extreme metal band that basically plays what we enjoy!

AU: Describe your sound for those of us who've never heard you before.

JM: We have a wide variety of influences to our sound, so it would be impossible to pigeonhole our sound! We use harsh vocals, lots of shred, and love blasting and grooving.... If you like a good riff chances are we have something for your palate.

AU: You put out a new album, *Reanimation*, at the beginning of the year - how has the reception been so far? What sets this release apart from your past albums?

JM: The reception has been fantastic! Four years since *Demons* (our second album) is quite a long time, and we have had a few lineup changes since then. The fresh lineup gave us a new approach to the song writing process which allowed us to hone in on the parts of the band we love!

AU: Does *Reanimation* explore any particular themes or topics, lyrically or otherwise?

JM: Like our previous albums, we take a sci-fi approach to the general concept along with the artwork. We always use ambiguous meanings within the concepts of the songs. In this album I explored rising up from depression and mental illness and creating your own new beginnings.

AU: You'll be spending April touring Canada; will this be your first visit? Are there any cities you're particularly looking forward to playing?

JM: For me personally and the band it is our first trip, but my fellow guitarist Morgan was born and raised in Toronto, so I assume that's going to be a highlight for him! Honestly I'm looking forward to every show, there is nothing better than experiencing the music and events I love

in different cultures/countries!! The reception is always fantastic when we travel far!

AU: Name three things you know about Canadians.

1. Timmy H does the best coffee and donuts in the world.
2. Mike Fortin, the best amplifier-maker in the world, is from Canada.
3. You guys picture our queen on your money!

AU: What does life on the road look like with Bloodshot Dawn - what is your tour survival toolkit?

JM: Like any band we take the rough with the smooth. Conditions can vary day by day, and keeping up on eating and sleeping can even become difficult! The main thing for me on tour is fresh socks! NO ONE LIKES SMELLY BAND MEMBERS... also headphones is a must. Lot of tape, also!

AU: Do you have any other tours planned for the rest of 2018? Are there any countries you've always wanted to play that you haven't made it to yet?

JM: Canada is a huge country we haven't managed to hit! Other than that, we are planning a full EU tour in the winter as well as a trip to Japan and some awesome euro festivals including TechFest in the UK and Hellfest in France!

AU: Why should we attend a Bloodshot Dawn show, what can we expect to see? Conversely, what do you hope your audiences will take away from your live performance?

JM: If you enjoy tight unrelenting metal and a good pit, we are the band for you! We love to incite a bit of madness at our shows as well as delivering some technical insanity on the instruments! We hope the audience can take away the energy and enjoyment we have to offer them when we play.... and maybe a CD.

AU: What does the far future hold for Bloodshot Dawn?

JM: We will continue to tour *Reanimation* across 2018/2019 whilst working on our fourth album!

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

JM: We are an extremely driven band that will not rest until we are playing all over the world! We are determined. If you don't like us the first time, we will be back to convince you otherwise! We also really like hummus on our rider.

AU: Any final words for Canadian fans?

JM: We hope to see you all in April, we have a special set comprising songs from all our albums, so we can catch up on lost time! Come say hi at the merch table, we don't bite!

facebook.com/BloodshotDawn/
bloodshotdawn.bandcamp.com/

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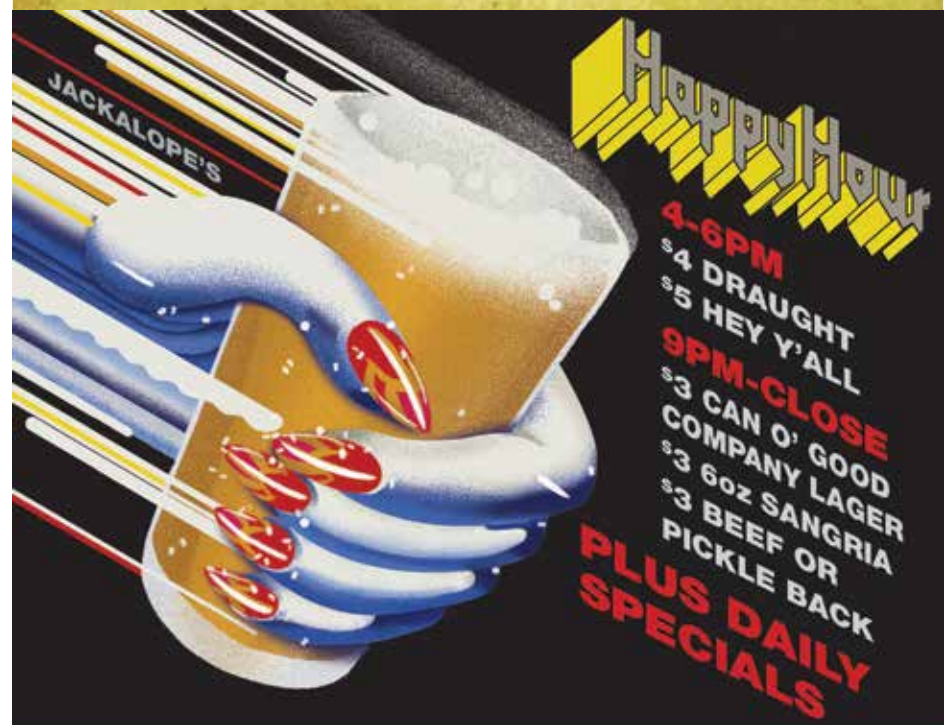
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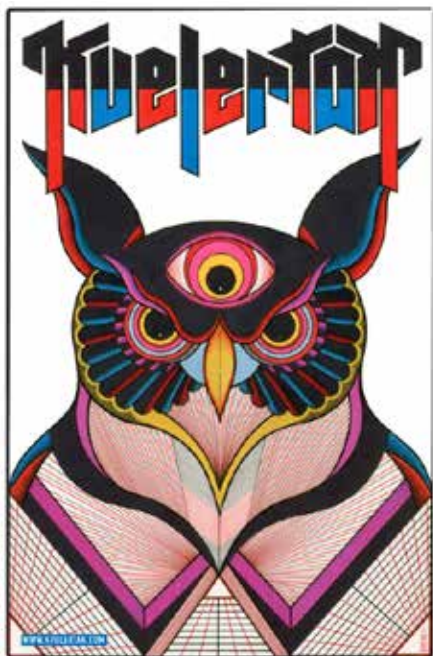
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Kvelertak

Interview by Michael Luis

Let's say, hypothetically, that a scruffy, disoriented guy in a leather jacket were to approach me. "Hey, man," he says, "I just came here in a time machine from 1974. I'm a huge fan of Zeppelin and Sabbath, and I was wondering, what does heavy metal sound like in 2018?" I may just have to show him Kvelertak. The quintet takes the attitude of hardcore punk, the soaring theatrics of cock rock, and the sheer brutality of black metal, and wraps it all up into a dynamic package that has made them superstars in their native Norway and a rising force abroad. *Absolute Underground's* Michael Luis sat down with lead screamer Erlend Hjelvik at their most recent Vancouver show.

Absolute Underground: Let's talk about the new album. This is first time you guys self-

produced. What was the thought process behind doing that instead of getting an outside producer?

Erlend Hjelvik: Even when we worked with Kurt Ballou [of Converge, GodCity Studios fame] in the States, he produced it a bit more than what was the case with working with our engineer Nick Terry this time, but we always interfered anyways [laughs]. I think we're difficult. We know how we want it to sound. And Bjarte in our band has lots of experience producing bands in Oslo. So it was just a couple guys in the band in a room with Nick, figuring out how it should sound together.

AU: That makes sense. So, the first song you guys released was "1985," which showcases your classic-rock influence a bit more.

EH: Yeah.

AU: I hear an almost AC/DC or even Van Halen-influenced thing going on.

EH: It's funny how polarizing it's been when it comes to our fans. People either love it or hate it, it seems. It's just good to throw people off and do something different. Even if I don't think it's that different from a song like "Kvelertak," the last song from our second album. I think it's kind of the same vibe, pretty much.

AU: I think why it threw people off is that it was a single, like their first taste of the album.

EH: I can tell you it's the most radio-friendly song on the album. It got A-listed immediately on the region radio.

AU: Another thing about the new album that's a bit different is that this is the first time you guys haven't had a John Dyer Baizley (of Baroness) painting for the album art. Had you asked him this time around or you just decided to use someone else?

EH: Just decided to do something else. We did the first two albums with Kurt Ballou and John Baizley so we were doing this new album in a new way, recording it live and stuff, doing it in Oslo and working with different people. We [thought] it would be cool to get a new guy to make the cover. Arik Roper [art for Sleep, Black Crowes,

High on Fire] has been at the top of my list ever since we started the band. I always wanted to use him.

AU: Yeah, it's a beautiful cover.

EH: It's pretty striking,



and I think it's perfect with the music on the album. It reminds me of something that could be on a 70s science-fiction book.

AU: I'd also like to ask you about the owl that's seen a lot in your band. You guys have three or four shirts at the merch table featuring an owl, owls on your album covers, and even an owl on your head on-stage. Was this just a coincidental thing that happened, or is there a deliberate symbolism?

EH: It was kind of random how it started. When it was time to make a cover for our demo collection we made ourselves — it's called *Westcoast Holocaust* [laughs] — we were like, "Why don't we just put an owl on the cover?" That was before shit-loads of bands started doing it after [laughs]. I wouldn't say it was because of us, but I just noticed like Nightwish and shitty bands like that had it as the cover. Even Devildriver and stuff like that. It was just a cool, mystic animal to me. It's our mascot. It's our Eddie.

AU: I was about to say!

EH: There's a [store] down there called Owl Drugs [E Hastings, near The Rickshaw]. I really want to go take a band photo there, but I don't know if we have time!

AU: Anything you'd like to add to your Canadian fans, perhaps readers in places you've never visited like Edmonton, Regina?

EH: Vagina? [laughs] I'm just kidding.

AU: You want to tell the people of Regina that the name of their city rhymes with vagina? I'm sure they've never heard that before...

EH: Probably not!

AU: But yeah, anything else you'd like to add for Canadian fans?

EH: Check out the new album. If you liked anything by us before, this is the best album yet. Check it out and we'll try to come back more. We love playing here.

AU: And we love having you here!

Kvelertak.com

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Heron

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most infamous for?

HERON: We are Bina, Jamie, Ross, and Scott. Just a bunch of old dogs playing slow, heavy as fuck songs. Collectively we have probably been in more bands than you've had hot dinners.

AU: Give us a brief history of Heron. When/how did you form, who are the band members?

Scott: Heron had our first jam in the winter of 2013 with the original lineup being myself, Ross and Spencer Clark on drums. We recorded an EP and played a few shows to support it. Spencer then decided to part ways around the time Jamie had joined the band as our lead vocalist and noisemaker. Shortly thereafter, Bina moved to Vancouver and was looking for a band to join. That was essentially the real beginning of Heron.

AU: You released an EP, *Fire Twin*, just recently, and now you're going full steam ahead with the release of *A Low Winter's Sun* – have you guys been sitting on this album a while?

Bina: Not at all, haha. We recorded the new album in November 2017 with Jesse Gander over five days at Raincity Recorders. We've already started to write new songs and we are just now about to release *A Low Winter's Sun*.

AU: What can we expect to hear on the new album, musically and otherwise? Do you explore any particular themes or topics?

Jamie: We didn't really set out to make an album with a central theme but generally our songs touch on things like loss and longing, existentialism, the universe, time, space, and insignificance.

Ross has a very stark and brutal lyrical style while Jamie's tend to be more like cut up prose. We think the contrast works well together.

AU: How have you found your sound evolving as a band in general since your first recordings?

Scott: Heron has been through a few big changes since our first jam in late 2013. With a few drummers that had left the band and the addition of Jamie as our vocalist/electronics coordinator in 2016, our songs from then to now couldn't be more different. When Bina joined the band we finally found the sound we had all been looking for. The songs are heavier, longer and more melodic with these beautiful almost sad, post-metal parts. Our set blends from one song to the next almost like a concept, but not. Things are much different now then how they use to be and we are very excited for what we have been doing as a band now, and stoked for what is yet to come.

AU: The album cover is very cool – who did the artwork?

Jamie: The artwork is by Cryptworm who also did the art for our second EP. We have been lucky to work with some great artists for other merch but

we love going to Cryptworm for album art. He always seem to know what we want with minimal direction.

AU: You're doing the album release show in Victoria this time, tell us about the gig! What are you most looking forward to?

Scott: Originally the gig at Logans Pub in Victoria was just set as a tour kick off for all four bands playing (Heron, Mendoza, Buzzard & Chunkasaurus). We are all heading out to play the 420 Music and Arts Festival in Calgary, AB with a few other shows along the way in Vancouver and Kelowna. We have gigs booked all the way into August so we figured why not release *A Low Winter's Sun* the same day we head out on the road. Really stoked to be shredding a bunch of shows with a ton of good pals!

AU: What else does the summer hold for Heron? You've got a couple wicked gigs announced already...

Scott: We have a few solid shows booked that we are really pumped to be playing. In June we have a killer weekend starting in Vancouver with one of my current favourite bands The Atlas Moth, at The Astoria in Vancouver. The next day we head out to Victoria to directly support the mighty Primitive Man at The Capital Ballroom. There is also a couple festivals booked, one being the Metalocalypstick Festival in Lone Butte, BC over the Canada Day long weekend. We also have a week long west coast tour in the works for August/September.

AU: Any plans for more extensive touring, music videos, etc?

Scott: We are planning

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to organize a western Canadian tour in late summer. As for music videos, we have yet to do one, but I would imagine if we did it would be a DIY kind of deal. A few us have backgrounds in film and television, which makes it easier for us to take on a project with a limited budget. Shooting is fun, and I hope that is something that can happen soon.

AU: Where and in what formats can we grab a copy of the new record?

Jamie: The album will be available April 14th 2018, digitally on Bandcamp, iTunes and Spotify. We are making physical versions on CD and cassette that you can get from our website or one of our shows.

AU: What's next for Heron? Any big goals on the horizon? Will you be recording more this year?

Bina: *A Low Winter's Sun* is our first full

length album with this lineup. we've been writing so ferociously that we need to record every three months just to keep up. So we're definitely going to be going into the studio before this year us up.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

Bina: You should probably know even though we prefer wetlands, swamps and coastlines, we would like to tour Europe or Japan in the near future. Also despite our name, no one in the band has long legs.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Heron: Follow the smoke to the riff-filled land and keep listening to doom metal!

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Titty Titty Bong Bong

Second Annual Burlesque Show

By April Ace

Do you love Mary Jane as much as we do? Do you love seeing sexy woman having fun and entertaining you!? Titty Titty Bong Bong is an island original; I had to bring it back again and make it even better. I am so excited to bring some exciting new faces to Nanaimo that you haven't seen before, as well as a couple performers you have already fallen in love with.

Titty Titty Bong Bong brings the glitz and glam of classic burlesque strip tease and combines it with the ridiculous hilarity of pot smoking. There is sure to be an act or two for every one that walks through that door, along with lots of prize giveaways to be had, and memories to take home with you for a lifetime!

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On Putin's Blacklist

Interview by Ed Sum

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Filmmaker and Documentarian Boris Ivanov's debut feature length work, *On Putin's Blacklist* was a challenge to construct; he believes there's a new cold war happening and it is here to stay. While he is no stranger to examining the occult side of many political wranglings, ranging from History Channel's *Beyond Top Secret* to *In The Monument* (looking at the evolution of Holocaust memorialization), he has many types of films under his belt. He's even working on a feature-length film, *Hell to Pay*, which involves making a deal with the devil, which is still in development. While making a stamp in the supernatural is tough, it's Ivanov's look at the world at large which stands out. I got a chance to talk to him about this work, and about meeting with Pussy Riot. Both him and this band were very outspoken about life in the old country.

Boris Ivanov: The point I want to show is how heartless politics can be where even innocent children can become a prey to peoples' ambitions. With *On Putin's Blacklist*, the focus is more about how politics get involved in simple things as international adoption—and far greater issues. The most surprising thing for me in making this film was with those American citizens working in Russia. They were afraid to give me interviews because they thought Putin was going to get them.

Absolute Underground: What are some of the other topics you wanted to explore with this work?

BI: [One aspect and] unfortunate part is the anti LGBT campaigns which have become part of Russian ideology—the government is spewing hatred. In the republic of Chechnya in Russia, there was a "cleansing." Thankfully, individuals were able to come to Canada last year. That

makes me very proud to be Canadian. They are also trying to say foreign countries have this freedom. And we in Russia are different—we are orthodox, we are religious. We believe in families.

AU: How did Pussy Riot become involved?

BI: They were a late addition. I was already editing when I heard they were coming to Vancouver, BC. I thought it would be interesting to interview them. Of course, they were one of the first to go against Putin and they were very vocal. Everybody all around the world heard about their internment. So that is why I decided to include them. The whole segment with Pussy Riot was filmed in one day; it ended up being shorter than I'd hoped, but I was glad to include them.

AU: What was cut that you wish you could put back in the work?

BI: I asked Maria Alyokhina whether she will end up emigrating or being pushed out of Russia by Putin. She thinks she'll see him leave before she does.

AU: If you were to give this piece more of a rebellious feel, what would you add?

BI: Alexei Navalny is Russia's opposition leader. He's led demonstrations against Putin and the corruption that surrounds him and his government. Despite being physically attacked, being convicted on trumped up charges, seeing his brother sent away to prison just to get to him, he still continues his fight. Navalny was denied running in the presidential election this



March because of the conviction they pinned on him exactly for that purpose. He is a folk hero for some, and an enemy of the Russian state for others. Filming him would have a punk rock feel in modern Russia. Luckily, someone else is doing it and we'll hopefully be able to see it: <http://www.newdocs.de/the-russian-opposition/>

AU: Do you see an end coming soon?

BI: It is very hard to see the end to this Cold War. Putin is young. He's going to be in power for a while. He's making sure no one can challenge him. And, as my film presents, it's very hard to fight him and this system of hypocrisy that's supporting him.

AU: When is the video release?

BI: The film was released on iTunes and cable VOD on March 13, 2018.

VIFF spotlight: <https://bit.ly/2pSDzzJ>

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The Penske File

Interview by Esther Wurley

Absolute Underground: How long have you been on Stomp Records? What's so great about them? What made you move over from Skin And Bones Collective after they released your 2011 album *Young Hearts On Trial*?

Travis Miles: We've been with Stomp since 2015 and the release of our last record *Burn Into The Earth*. Growing up, we were always big fans of the label and their alumni such as Flatliners, Saint Alvia, Subb and a whole bunch more, so once we found out they were interested we were all about it. Skin and Bones Collective wasn't so much an actual label as it was just a name we slapped on all our early shows and records as well as some friend's records. It was kinda just a bunch of bushy tailed kids, us included, messing around in the Burlington music scene.

AU: I was instantly hooked on the first track off your new record, "Kamikaze Kids." Tell me about this song? Who are the Kamikaze Kids? Are you them? Are they you?

TM: Thanks a lot. We are all definitely proud of that tune. It's perhaps our most collaborative song in the writing sense that we've put out to this day. As for your actual question, I suppose, in a sense. Alex wrote the first two verses and the 'kamikaze kids' refrain to that song a while back and we kind of formed the rest of the tune around that. I recently learned that it came to him while we were on tour in Europe and he was facetimeing a pal from back home and they were just filling each other in on hilarious stories that each other had been missing out on in their time on different continents. Alex thought that the moniker 'kamikaze kids' was a very suitable one in referring to our friends from back home, and I suppose it just stuck.

AU: I understand that the name of your band is a *Seinfeld* reference. I was watching a clip on YouTube and it took me down a rabbit hole of *Seinfeld* clips. Literally the best show ever, in my books! In ALL of the ridiculous references you could pull from that show, why this one?

TM: Such a great show! And in retrospect I'm sure there are a lot of *Seinfeld* references that would make much better band names. Some friends of ours actually had a band called Serenity Now! That's a way better reference for a band name. Anyways, we were in Grade 12 and were kind of taking a new direction from the band we had been playing in together throughout high school. Our good friend and former guitarist Chris had a whole list of potential band names and The Penske File was among those. All of us being big fans of the show, it ended up being the name we disagreed on the least.

AU: Since you guys are on tour right now, I want to ask you about your rider. I booked a band, they wanted me to buy them socks. I didn't, as it was a bit over my paygrade, but then walked in on one of them changing, fully nude... I now know why they wanted socks. So, what's on your rider besides the usual? Or would you rather take a buyout for more beer?

TM: Having odd and specific rider requirements is

definitely not something we ever do. Realistically no one cares about us enough to even consider sorting M&Ms or buying socks for our genitalia, haha. We are just generally stoked when we get a meal and some drinks. The simple hospitality goes a long way with us. Adding some dang cigs and fresh mangos into the mix would be pretty tight though.

AU: What are you most excited about with your new release? I really dig the album art!

TM: We recorded this thing in the winter of 2016/2017, and wrote most of the songs within a year or so leading into that, so it definitely feels like it's been a long time coming for us. At this point I'd say I'm just extremely excited to start playing these songs live and emerge from the stage of things where I obsessively critique the record over and over again. Once it's out I probably won't listen to it much again and am totally jazzed that other people can start diggin' in. We put a lot of work and emotion into this damn thing, and are stoked to share it with as many folks as possible. Also very pumped to just tour a shit load over the next couple years.

AU: Where is the farthest you've ever toured? Any plans to go farther than there?

TM: Hmm. I'm sure it's somewhere in Europe, although I'm not sure exactly where. We definitely have plans to spread further. Australia and/or Japan would be cool. Hopefully we'll get to make that happen at some point in our life as a band. If we can make sense of it, no where



is too far really, getting to travel and experience foreign places and cultures is a huge plus to this whole band thing for all of us. We'd probably play on the moon if those dang space promoters would stop ghosting us.

AU: What is your favourite thing to sing along to in the shower?

TM: Jeez, that's a good one. Without putting too much thought into it I'm gonna say Abba's "Dancing Queen." In all reality I most likely to just hum out whatever ditty is in my head at that time.

AU: What venue do you wish you could bring back for one night only and play at?

TM: Maple Leaf Gardens, baby!

AU: Top five Canadian bands at the moment?

TM: I'm gonna just go off of what I'm listening to a lot of right now for this one. Canada is so rich with good music and it's definitely tough to choose. But here's some currents bands/artists from here that I'm really digging at the moment.

Terra Lightfoot

The Flatliners

Matt Mays

The Dirty Nil

Glorious Sons

AU: Dream gig?

TM: We've really been lucky in our life as a band to have checked a lot of dream gigs off our respective lists. Honestly it's hard to pin it down. There's so many things we'd like to do. I can say with confidence that there would be free popcorn, affordable beverages and probably a water slide. But outside of that, I just don't know.

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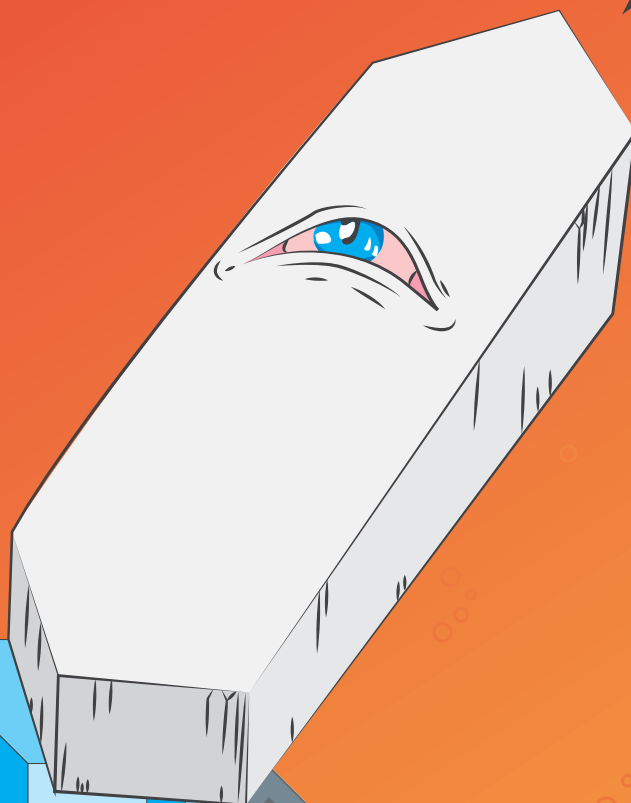
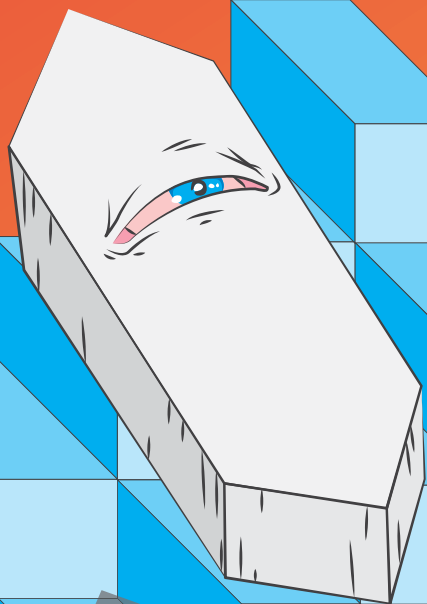
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Urn

Interview by Ira Hunter



Absolute Underground:
Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Dominic St. Charles: I'm Dominic St. Charles of Urn, and probably most infamous for being the most obnoxious Pittsburgh Penguins fan in the state of Florida.

AU: When and where did your band Urn get started? What was the genesis of the band?

DSC: The band officially came together in 1994 in Cleveland, as we were more of a death metal band back in those days, having played with bands like Deicide. I also at the time had a gothic rock band called Sacrosanct that featured occult-novelist Michelle Belanger as the lead singer. In 1998, we went out playing/touring in The Electric Hellfire Club for a little while, and relocated to Chicago. I ended up merging the two bands together into the current incarnation, keeping the Urn moniker.

AU: Can you describe Urn's sound?

DSC: It depends on the Chinese Zodiac year. Predominately we've been classified by national trade media as "dark metal." I honestly have no idea what that means. The way we look at it is

we pride ourselves on our diversity with our music. Depending on what shows/events we're playing we can be more of gothic/symphonic type of band along the lines of Type O Negative, Paradise Lost, Opeth and the like.

We also do quite a bit of Celtic and folk rock/metal as well to point we can even perform as an acoustic orchestra. We utilize a violinist and flautist to enhance these songs live. Once, while doing a radio interview, a fan called in and described us as, "The Dropkick Murphys meet Metallica." To be honest, at the time I wasn't subscribing to that point of view all too well, but in hindsight it is an excellent description.

AU: Who's in the band? What other bands have the members been in?

DSC: That's a loaded question.

Currently, we're franchised with members all across the United States and parts of Guatemala. The main line-up would be myself on lead vocals/ lead guitars and 12-string acoustic.

We have Julian Umberger, co-founder of the band, on bass and backing vocals. He fronts the band when we do death metal shows.

Christopher Migdalski is our extended range guitarist, he was in Diabolic Intent a long-tenured technical death metal band out of Florida. Christopher has been battling Parkinson's the past twelve years, so at times David Alusik will fill in for him. David was best known for his work in the Indianapolis-based industrial band Nimbus.

Chris "The Troll" Shive, fills in on guitar/bass/ acoustic guitar depending on the touring party. He is best known for his work with the black metal band Clad in Darkness and is currently touring with Silent Ire

Cleve Hall is our keyboardist, whom most people would know him by his other craft as an award-winning special effects make-up artist and had his own reality show on SyFy called *Monster Man*.

Jenna Scifres is our violinist, she was involved with several Midwest US bands, but the Four Leaf Rovers was the group she performed with the longest next to Urn.

Eric James Petersen is our drummer and he was the one of the original members of The Electric Hellfire Club and has done touring work for American Idol contestant James Durbin. If/when he is unavailable, Graham Weeks formerly of Breathing Theory and does a lot of excellent work for us.

AU: I understand your keyboardist Cleve Hall has done Special FX on some pretty cool horror movies? Which ones are at the top of the list?

DSC: He's been involved with so many. That's what is great about Cleve, he doesn't brag or even tell you, so I'm always surprised when I see his name in the credits. He's best known for classic films like *Re-Animator*, *Ghoulies*, *Troll*, *Pee Wee's Big Adventure*... he played Godzilla in that. Also some movies you wouldn't expect, like *The Sandlot*. He made the Monster Dog in that. He also works with bands, like making Gene Simmons' armor for KISS, Tenacious D, Alice Cooper, Marilyn Manson, ICP, Devo... Devo actually wrote a song about him. He even got an Emmy Nomination for designing the costumes in *Yo Gabba Gabba*. An incredibly varied career, but he's very quiet about it. You would never hear it from him.

AU: What are the biggest influences on your sound and the look of the band?

DSC: As you can see from the roster, we come from an extensively diverse background of music. I would have to answer that as a collective whole I would say the five primary musical influences on Urn would be Type O Negative, Paradise Lost, Tristania, Amorphis, and The Sisters of Mercy.

AU: What are the themes you explore in your songs?

DSC: Muses that we gravitate towards are themes of introspection. A lot of depression and despair in our earlier albums, more recent themes are illumination, determination, resolve. Hence why the most recent album was entitled *Epiphany*.

AU: Are you working on releasing a new album? Which record label are you on?

DSC: Yes, we have finished up the writing process on a new album tentatively titled *Semicolon* or ":", We were recently with Dark Moon Records and have satisfied our contract with them, so we're currently in talks with a couple of independents who have expressed interest in releasing the new title.

AU: Are you looking forward to performing at the Calgary Horror Con this June? Anything special planned for the performance?

DSC: Absolutely! We're extremely excited about coming back to Western Canada for the first time in almost a decade. Major thanks to Dan Doherty and all of his amazing support of us and allowing us this opportunity.

Yes, we are going to debut a couple new songs from the upcoming *Semicolon* album exclusively for this show and Cleve is going to doing us up in signature style in terms of makeup and scenery.

AU: Anything else you'd like to promote?

DSC: Yes, thank you so much for the opportunity for us to share with your readers. We just launched our new video for our song "Silently, I'm Still Screaming." This marked Cleve and Eric's debut with us and featured Christopher's lead work while raising awareness for Parkinson's research. Here is the link to the video on our YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxnRzmpoxRw>

AU: Final words for Canadian fans?

DSC: Thank you so much for your patience and continued support. Some of the greatest and landmark shows in our career were Canadian, such as Montreal when toured with Tarja Turunen in 2009. The hospitality and friendliness that we receive every time we come is overwhelming and we deeply appreciate it on many levels.

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Early Ottawa Punk

Interview by Jason Flower

With Stuart Smith of the Rotters Club / Double Helix studio, concert going fan Geoff Pevere, and our star Doug McRae from Vendetta.

Doug: In the summer of 1976, I was having a few beers at a friend's place on Bronson Ave in Ottawa when a car full of band gear pulled into the parking lot behind the tri-plex. Three motley characters exited the car and we struck up a conversation. Ron Hooft, the bass player lived next door, and they were going to practice at his place. My friend Paul asked them if they wanted to setup and play a few tunes in his place, and they said "sure."

There wasn't a singer in the band, but Mitch did a fine job belting out a handful of tunes. The real power was in the music... it was raw and gritty. I asked if I could try a song or two and loved what I heard. They packed up their gear and left and a couple days later I got in touch with Mitch and asked if I could join the band. Mitch loved the jam session that we had and said "you're in." The rest is history. The original line-up was Mitch (The Snake) Roberts on lead guitar and vocals, Ron Hooft (Mr. Ron) on bass, Gerry Hoelke (The Vulture) on drums, and myself Doug McRae (Duggie) on vocals.

The punk scene in Ottawa was very much centred around The Rotters Club and founder Stuart Smith. The basement club at the corner of Bank and Frank streets was jammed pack with sweaty punks and highly energetic bands from Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto. I'll never forget the girls sitting on the sinks in the men's bathroom making lewd comments to all who were brave enough to stand at the urinals... nope, I'll never forget them!



Geoff: Stuart told me about bomb threats he received after opening Rotters, Ottawa's pioneering punk venue, in that seminally noisy year of 1977. Death threats, too. The tires on his vehicle were slashed a total of 17 times. Rival club-owners weren't happy about this instantly

successful punk upstart, and the local musicians' union took a dim view of the Rotters' cheeky policy of insisting bands play original music only, which ran directly counter to the bizarre, and thankfully long-gone dictum that only cover music could be performed in local live venues.

Stuart: We ran the Rotters Club in tandem with our Double Helix recording studio, this allowed us to promote original music just as the new wave thing was taking off. Bands could not afford demos so they played the club, we collected the gate, and then during the day we recorded up at my house near Meech Lake. Tascam 8 track dbx encoded on half inch reels, we had one of the first machines in the country – they changed everything and took the power away from the industry and into the hands of the artists.

Doug: In and around the time of "Modern Rockers" and "I Wanna Be a Star" we recorded a number of songs at Double Helix Studios with Stuart Smith and Carl Schultz; songs like "Got No Money," "Space Junkie," "Don't Be a Fool," "Singing in the Rain," and "You Got a Problem." "Modern Rockers" was very popular in the Ottawa and Eastern Ontario & Western Quebec and got the most airplay from Radio CKCU-FM (Carleton University).

Vendetta would play anywhere, it didn't matter the venue. Johnny Fingers joined on rhythm guitar and Chris Lawrence on Sax. We played more than a dozen times at The Rotters Club including opening for The Secrets from Toronto. That performance was filmed by the Algonquin College Mobile so we had a fantastic



ref: The Globe and Mail, July 4, 2014 used with the kind permission of Geoff Pevere.

Images from the personal archives of: Stuart Smith, Carl Schultz, and Doug McRae.

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Blood, Women, & Horror in Hollywood

By Vince D'Amato

Last November I received an email from Miles Flanagan, who wanted to meet with me at the American Film Market in Santa Monica. Although the American Film Market is something of a mecca for B-movies, usually, the film markets are held for companies and producers to buy and sell films. So it was slightly un-usual when Miles said he'd wanted to meet up to chat about film festivals, but when I met Miles in person, it all made sense. He is a very energetic, friendly, and magnetic personality who is the founder of the Boobs & Blood film festival in Los Angeles, which features horror films and sexy flicks and guests from all over the world (with a slight leaning towards Japanese erotic cinema). Miles also founded the Hollywood Horrorfest, which up until a couple of years ago had been held at the New Beverly cinema, which is possibly more famous due to its current owner. This year, after a hiatus from both of these popular film festivals, Miles is making a comeback – not only will there be a new Hollywood Horrorfest and a Boobs & Blood festival at a new venue, but he is about to launch the first issue of the *Boobs & Blood* magazine. A few days ago, I had a quick Q&A with Miles regarding all of this...



Miles Flanagan: "The idea behind *Boobs & Blood* [was originally] a film script, about a time-traveling cinema. It was filled with crazy genre characters - sexy nurse, gorilla, caveman, mad scientist - you get the idea. Eventually I realized it would be easier putting on the actual Boobs & Blood Film Festival than trying to get the film made. So I went to the New Beverly and booked the theater. The cinema operator/manager, Michael, was always great; the Beverly had been in his family for decades. Our first festival was in 2010, and we got our volunteers to dress up in gorilla costumes. Some of the girls offered to dress up in nurse outfits, so we had our genre characters in the theater. It was a lot of fun. The Hollywood Horrorfest was a faster creation. In 2014 we had our first HHF at the New Beverly. Being a big fan of Vincent Price I decided to create the Price Award (designed by Ryan Whearty). I contacted Victoria Price and told her we'd raise money for the Vincent Price Art Museum here in East LA. She was great and came down to hand the first Price Award to Joe Dante.

Absolute Underground: Who were some of your favourite guests at these festivals?

MF: I discovered a company here in LA – Pink Eiga - who were distributing Japanese Pink movies on DVD; we got together and were soon putting together a fun program and bringing actors and directors over from Japan.

Actress/director Yumi Yoshiyuki was fantastic, we became fast friends. I also became friends with another of our guests, actress Reiko Yamaguchi, who met our DJ, got married a year later and had a baby! Boobs & Blood really brings people together! One of our favorite guests was Mr. Pink (Yutaka Ikejima) reputedly the world's most prolific film director. He loved the festival, loved L.A. During his award acceptance he sang an Elvis song. Believe it or not it was a very moving experience - the audience really loved him. His joy at being here was so honest and contagious.

I contacted Anulka (star of *Vampyres*, 1974) and she agreed to be involved. We were raising money for the Breast Cancer charity, Bowling For Boobies, at the time so that helped. If people know you're doing something good, fun and worthwhile you attract more good people. Anulka was so cool. She spoke at length after the screening then signed photos for everyone in the theater. She brought her own photos and didn't charge anything. Can you believe that? That's unheard of.

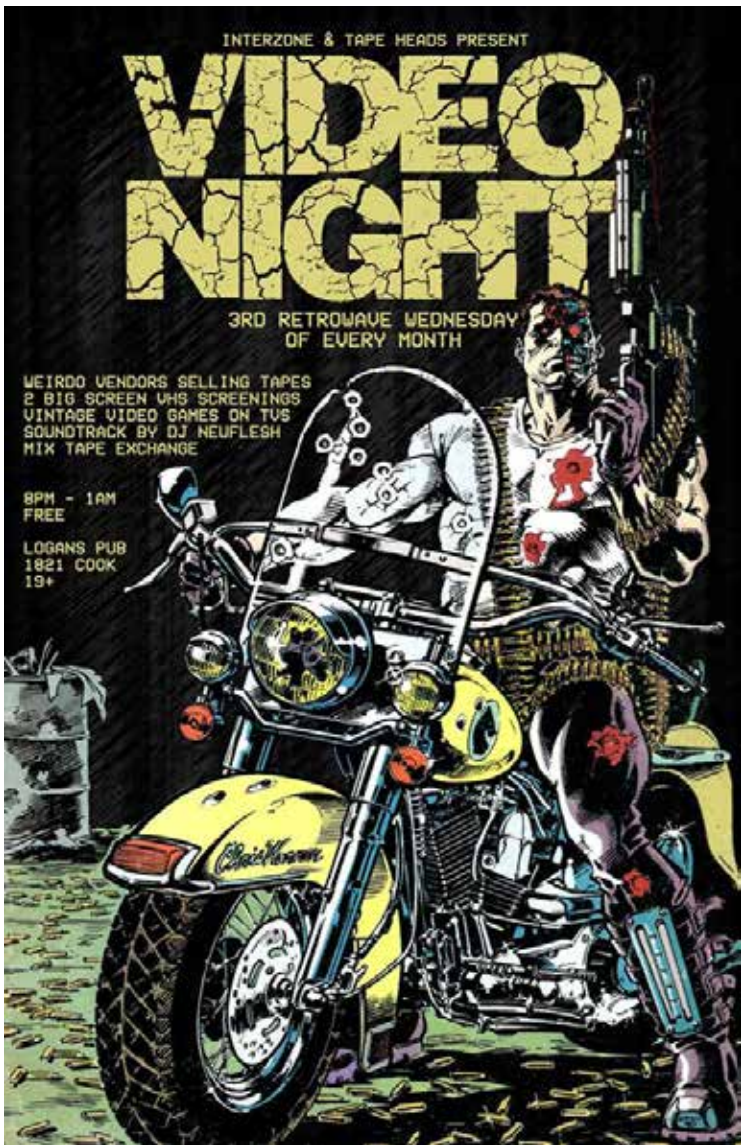
AU: Have you been able to keep these exhibitions going each consecutive year since their inception, or have circumstances forced you to skip random years?

MF: I was exhausted after the first B&B. B&B then became a traveling venue, mostly popping up at friend's film studios and FX houses in LA. We'd set up a party - DJ, go-go dancers, charity raffle and lots of industry guests. We were a place where indie filmmakers could come and network and raise money for charity. We did that for years, until I decided it was time to do another big Boobs & Blood Festival, and make it an annual event. The [first] HHF was a big success, and I was all set for the next one in 2015. Then the New Beverly changed hands and Quentin Tarantino took over. I should explain that it is only because of Quentin that the Beverly is still in existence. The trouble was that they only screen films now. So I had to cancel HHF 2015 and find another venue. It took years, [because] I was determined to find something that was more socializing-friendly than a regular cinema. I wanted to give fans the chance to have a drink with their friends, and their heroes, while watching movies too. Eventually I found the perfect venue. It has a bar, [which] was actually shipped here from the UK in the 1920s. It's gorgeous. And the beer is cheap!

AU: Can you tell us what could be coming up for the 2018 season?

MF: Boobs & Blood this year celebrates Women in Horror, in a BIG way. We'll be screening lots of amazing Pink films from Japan and focusing on the newer films. The industry is making more female-centric films with stronger female characters, which is great. They're still batshit bonkers at times and very erotic. We'll still have live go-go dancers on stage - and lots of retro Italian soundtrack music. We've

Absolute Horror



always had a large female following, which I'm very proud of. We don't show torture porn or misogynistic crap at all, just erotic, sexy, blood-stained classics. We're having an all female group of judges, several "women in horror" panels featuring name guests and people in the industry - all while raising awareness and funds for the Breast Cancer charity, Feel Your Boobies. I deliberately picked October as the B&B month as it's also Breast Cancer Awareness month. That's very important. We'll be doing a lot throughout the weekend to promote awareness. I'm really excited about giving over the festival to women and focusing on the issues and successes they are having within the industry. It's going to be so cool!"

AU: You've just launched the new Boobs & Blood magazine, too.

MF: The magazine is a dream come true. In the premiere issue we have a wonderful interview with Japan's Takao Nakano. He's the lead writer for *Ultraman*, a Pink director, editor and writer. We have an exclusive with the last of the female Pink directors (though hopefully not for long), Yumi Yoshiyuki. It's a really interesting insight into a world that's rarely explored (even in Japan). We also went to Tokyo and shot some exclusive glamor shots of actress Riri Kouda, and interviewed UK's "answer to Stan

Lee" Dez Skinn. He not only published *V For Vendetta*, but also created the influential magazines *House Of Hammer* & *Monster Mag* in the UK. And everyone who buys it gets 50% off all



B&B Festival screenings.

AU: Can you give us a little taste of some of your favourite genre films recently?

MF: I've been getting back into Giallo recently, catching up on the films I've missed. I absolutely loved *Spasmo* (1974). I was stunned by how great *Don't Torture A Duckling* (1972) is. It's Lucio Fulci's best film. My favorite Japanese film currently is Noboru Tanaka's *Watcher In The Attic* (1976) starring the gorgeous - and in this film, very disturbing - Junko Miyashita. It's a beautiful and evocative tale of horror and eroticism, and creepy as hell.

More information on the Hollywood Horrorfest and the Boobs & Blood festival and upcoming magazine publication can be found here:

www.hollywoodhorrorfest.com
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 Submissions for both festivals through FilmFreeway.com
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Greber

Interview by Willow Gamberg

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most infamous for?

Marc Bourgon: This is Marc from Greber speaking, and I believe that I am most infamous for my lack of notable infamy.

AU: Give us a brief band history, how did you meet and come to form Greber?

MB: Steve and I met and played together in the now-defunct band Tugnut. The decision was made to go our separate ways in that band, and Steve and I stuck together to start a new one called Greber. We've been making what we consider "music" ever since, and it's been a friggin' blast. A right friggin' blast.

AU: You released your third full length album, Cemetery Preston, back in February – tell us about it! How does it compare with your

previous releases musically? Do you explore any particular themes or topics with it?

MB: Overall, we tried to get a darker and uglier sound on this record. I feel like we've come as close as we ever have to maximizing the bass and drum combo, and it's nice to know that people are digging it. Topically, it's pretty all over the place. From songs about us throwing our lives away to ones about naysayers offing



themselves, it spans some pretty wide turf. It's nice to get it out there, get it said. Sometimes I think I would fucking lose it if I didn't write down that sort of nonsense.

AU: The album name is intriguing – is there a backstory there that you'd care to let us in on?

MB: The name "Cemetery Preston" was originally a working title for one of the songs on the record. It's pretty much our attempt at taking a living snapshot of a day to day death march. Preston is a borough of Cambridge that was the main

inspiration for the song and the two words sounded nice when bluntly mashed together so we went with it.

AU: What do you hope people will take away from both the album and from your live performance of it?

MB: From the album: These guys are not having a good time in life.

From a live performance: Hey, these guys are actually having a great time. Posers.

AU: What format(s) is the album available in, and where can we get it?

MB: We have the album available on 12" vinyl, CD, cassette and digital. It was released through Ancient Temple Recordings, D7-i Records, Pink Lemonade Records and Hibernation Release. A quick Google of any of those should put you in the right place. We also have all of that stuff available on our bandcamp.

AU: You followed the album release with a short east coast tour, do you have any further touring plans this year? Will you be venturing west at all?

MB: Not many touring plans as of yet. Have another handful of shows around Southern Ontario but that's pretty much it for now. Hopefully at some point in the future we'll make our way out west again. It's been too long, and Western Canada is always a great time.

AU: You released a sweet live video for a song from the new album – any plans to do more?

MB: We've entertained the idea of doing another one for the record but nothing solid has materialized yet. We were really happy with the one that Garth from Troublelight films did for us and would love to do another one with him at some point.

AU: We noticed the guitarist sporting a favourite Dead Quiet t-shirt of ours, and we've definitely seen the DQ boys sporting Greber merch... Do you have a favourite Dead Quiet song? If you could steal one member to join Greber, who would it be?

MB: I definitely have a thing for "Home is Where You Go to Die." That song rules. As far as

member stealing goes, stealing only one would be pointless. Dead Quiet summons its power from all sources. Removing one and isolating it would render the entire killing machine decommissioned.

AU: On that note, the whole two-member setup seems to be working perfectly well for you guys. Do you find being a duo becomes an advantage in regards to touring and recording?

MB: It's served us well so far. I admit that it would be sweet to have a guitar player doing some harmonic shit here and there but in the end it's the cross that we've chosen and we'll happily die here. The lack of a third member pushes Steve and I to squeeze as much as we can out of the setup we have, and I'm excited to see how we'll be able to push that format in the future.

AU: What does the future hold for Greber? Do you have more material in the works? Any particularly exciting gigs coming up that you'd like to tell us about?

MB: Couple exciting things in the works for us that are too many degrees off from happening to mention. Have a ton of new material in the works and hopefully we'll be playing around with that towards the end of the year. We're playing a show in Windsor with Cellos and Botfly that should rule. Been really stoked on what both of those bands have been doing lately and I have yet to see either of them live.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

MB: We are fanatics for Street Fighter 2. Give us an arcade version of that at a show and you'll see the gloves come off between us pretty damn fast.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

MB: Thanks for reading and thanks to you for the interview. Be excellent to each other.

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CUFF's Three Deadly Days of Kung Fu

By Cody No Teeth

This May the Calgary Underground Film Festival is transforming Globe Cinema into an old school grindhouse! From May 24th to May 26th CUFF is presenting eight Shaw Brothers kung-fu action films from the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Opening the event is the classic film *The 36th Chamber of Shaolin* from



1978. This film stars Gordon Liu (*Kill Bill*) who, while training at the Shaolin Temple, decides he wants to create a new form of kung-fu. *The 36th Chamber* is regarded as one of the finest examples of martial arts films that came out in the 1970s and was heavily sampled by RZA and the Wu-Tang Clan.

Following *The 36th Chamber* are some of the wackiest and wildest entries in the kung-fu genre. We have *The Boxer's Omen* a weird black magic infused revenge film from 1983, the female fronted *Come Drink with Me*, from 1966 and *Dirty Ho* from 1979, which also stars Gordon Liu. These three are all

outstanding action films from three decades of filmmaking that are sure to have the audience asking for more. But that's not all! There is a double feature to end all double features: *Crippled Avengers* and *Five Deadly Venoms*. *Crippled Avengers* is also known as *Return of the 5 Deadly Venoms* and stars four members of the Venom Mob on a revenge fueled mission to save their town from an evil warlord. In *Five Deadly Venoms* a student is asked by his dying master to check up on his five former students. Each of the students has learned a special animal technique of martial arts including the Snake style and Toad style. This film was sampled in Ol' Dirty Bastard's first solo album *Return to the 36 Chambers: The Dirty Version*. All of the movies mentioned so far are great but somewhat straight forward kung-fu films that you would expect from the Shaw Bros, but CUFF isn't stopping at strictly martial arts, they've also booked *Mighty Peking Man*. To those who don't know, *Mighty Peking Man* was the Shaw Brother's attempt at a *King Kong* style giant monster film. Following the success of films like *Godzilla* and the 1976 *King Kong* remake, Hong Kong wanted to capitalize on the giant monster craze. The film was originally released in 1977 in Hong Kong and was then retitled as *Goliath* in North America in 1980. *Mighty Peking Man* might just be the craziest film in the entire event and definitely needs to be seen to be believed. Rounding out the weekend you can also check out *Eight Diagram Pole Fighter* starring Gordon Liu whose father and siblings are all killed and he



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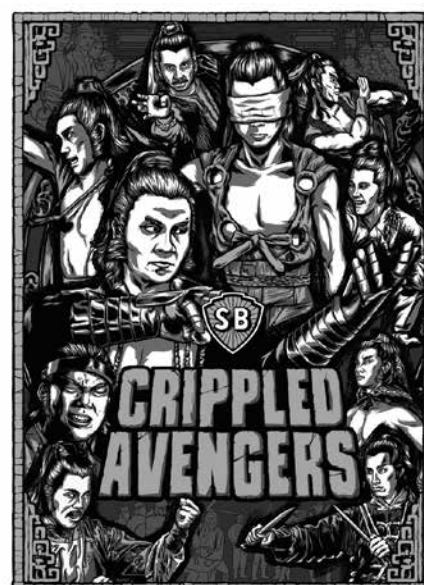
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must train in a monastery to get revenge for his family. CUFF's 3 Deadly Days of Kung Fu is sure to entertain hardcore action fans, but this is also a great way to experience what it would've been like living in New York and visiting 42nd Street back in the 1970s. Back to back kung-fu films from the masters of martial arts, count me in! You can visit calgaryundergroundfilm.org or globecinema.ca for show time and ticket info.

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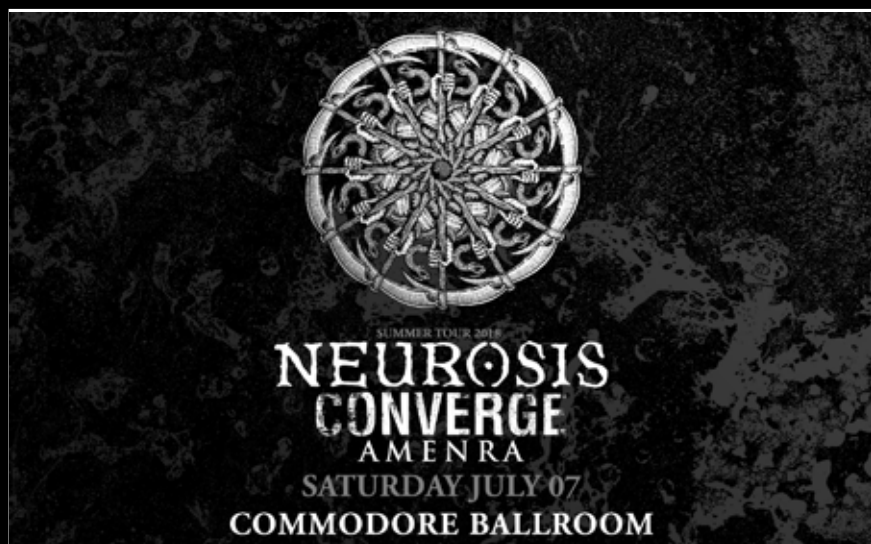
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PROHIBITION 2.0

By Ted Smith and Clea Maclean

Cannabis legalization is feeding patients to the wolves of corporate greed. Legal herb should be a boon to patients. Instead, the federal Liberal government's plans do little positive for patients while removing products from shelves of existing dispensaries.

The Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club is a compassion club that has been in operation since January 1996. The club's mandate has been to help people suffering with serious medical problems with a wide variety of topical and edible options. The VCBC has had its facilities raided five times by the police, with all 15 trafficking charges that were laid being beaten in court, including the unanimous Supreme Court of Canada decision of 2015 in the case of former head baker Owen Smith.

Now with over 6,500 members, our club has recently received rezoning from the city towards obtaining a business license. This process began before the federal government started its plans and everyone has hoped that what has started on the ground level in communities like Victoria will become a part of the future legal system. Despite the temptation of earning profit through sales to adults, our organization is content working strictly with patients through these changes.

Before we begin to sound totally negative, we want to encourage the government's recent move to create a separate license for small cultivators and processors. We have worked exclusively with small craft growers for decades and have maintained a kitchen to provide medicine to

our patients. We hope that many of our growers and our kitchen will soon receive licenses to operate legally. It is critical that legislation to legalize cannabis attempt to include all aspects of the current illegal industry as possible. Exclusion of current small scale operations will only serve to ensure a thriving "black market".

By refusing to allow individuals with a record of trafficking or large scale production the ability to obtain a license to cultivate or process cannabis, the government would be forcing many to remain illegally operating despite their wishes to do everything possible to comply with the new laws. Instead of convincing those most committed to the herb to become legit, these regulations would force them to continue to break the law if they want to stay in the cannabis field.

For many reasons requiring strict security measures is devastating in our club's circumstances. This sweeping measure would exclude myself, the club's founder, as I have been convicted of trafficking THC and cannabis after begin arrested at public giveaways. The irony of being automatically excluded from being a part of the legal scheme because I fought so hard for it is not lost on me.

There are many problems with the proposed limits on the types of products that will be initially allowed in this system, especially for patients who have been relying on many of these soon-to-be-prohibited-again products to maintain their health for years. Maybe the government needs to read the Smith decision from the Supreme Court of Canada again before considering any arbitrary laws restricting cannabis products.

By limiting the THC levels, Health Canada is forcing patients to consume much larger amounts of cannabis-infused vegetable oil than necessary to achieve the desired effect. Given the intense opiate crisis affecting the country, it

seems strange the government wants to restrict THC levels in cannabis products given how much safer the herb and its derivatives are. Patients struggling with cancer and other serious medical problems need affordable access to the strongest cannabis medicines possible.

Legalization should not force patients back to the black market. Products like suppositories, lozenges or massage oils mixed with other herbs have been supplied by our club to patients for years with very few issues. These products should be granted extra time to complete all required studies while still being sold to patients. Ironically these proposals will encourage a prolific black market and have the reverse effect the government claims to be looking for.

Restricting the products available for sale would be life-threatening to some of our patients and an unhealthy inconvenience to many others. It is counterintuitive to limit THC content when there is a national opiate crisis due to doctors having few safe choices to prescribe for pain medication. At the same time this new regime will have the effect of threatening doctors with having their licence revoked for prescribing safe and effective doses of THC over the restrictive limits placed by Health Canada.

We are utterly dismayed at the complete disregard for patients in these proposed regulations. The meagre changes proposed for the medical program provide no incentives for licensed distributors to provide special strains or products that only patients would require. By restricting the medical cannabis system to mail order, the government is making it extremely difficult for the sick, elderly and poor to access the right cannabis medicines.

With Licensed Producers itching to profit from recreational sales, there are no incentives for research into the medical benefits of cannabis included in these proposals. It is not clear if patients will receive any tax breaks, either, making cancer patients pay the same as young adults. It appears the only real benefit in legalization for patients is that they will no longer be automatically considered a criminal when found using cannabis in public.

Research and testing new drugs and new products is an important part of regulating health

care products. However, in this case we are talking about a drug that has been studied extensively and has been available illegally in compassion clubs for decades. It would be very unfair for those patients have been safely using crafted cannabis products through dispensaries like ours to temporarily lose access to these medicines, potentially for years until all of the testing is completed.

We find the proposed act very detrimental to the VCBC's members, as well as members of other established compassion clubs. We will continue to support, educate and supply patients who rely heavily on cannabis medicines, until we become a part of the system or the government does a better job for patients and we go out of business. Sadly, the proposed version of legalization appears more like Prohibition 2.0.

The new proposed act heavily supports big industry, even at the cost of destroying established communities of patients managing their health in a sustainable fashion. Absolutely no attempt is being made to ensure that these compassion clubs remain functioning and supported by government.

The social cost of removing a system that clearly brings medical and emotional support to communities of people who have been, or easily could be displaced, is unjustifiable. Any reasonable form of legalization would create special products and services for patients with lower taxes than recreational consumers pay.

We urge the federal and provincial governments to reconsider their approach to medical cannabis. The gold standard for legalization should include providing patients with more options, lower taxes, free safe consumption sites and other benefits that recreational consumers to do not require access to. It is very disappointing to see how problematic this legalization scheme appears to be for patients that have relied on our services for years.

Ted Smith is the founder and president of the Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club and Clea MacLean is a grower, patient and board member of the Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club.

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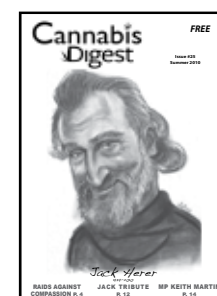
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Absolute Film Reviews

L7: Pretend We're Dead "Rags to Riches to Rags"

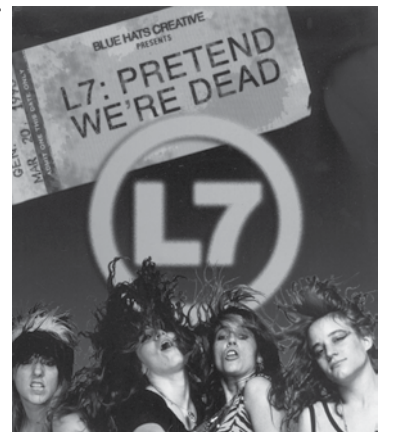
Ever seen a 70-mph food fight? Find yourself in the thick of it in this 2017 documentary featuring 90s punk superstars L7. With hilarious interviews and raw handycam footage, *L7: Pretend We're Dead* takes you through the motions of life, death, fame, and struggle as experienced by the members both collectively and individually.

In their formative years, the band considered themselves to be the antithesis of the misogynist LA hard rock scene. As they rose to fame alongside their friends (Nirvana, Fugazi, Faith No More), they found they were being pigeonholed as a girl band when all they wanted was to be recognized for their musicianship.

Pretend We're Dead includes interviews from bands they toured with, as well as musicians they influenced. I appreciated the diversity of perspectives and opinions on how L7 shaped punk and grunge; Joan Jett, Bratmobile, Veruca Salt, The Distillers, and others all had some really valuable things to say about the environment of music at the time and what made L7 so fucking perfect.

It's hard to get to the nitty gritty of what I thought about the documentary without oversharing and spoiling the stories. I enjoyed every second of it and wish I could see them live again because I appreciate them so much more now than I did before. Between the big feature and the extras, this release is a fucking goldmine of entertainment and knowledge of one of the best punk bands to date.

- Aeryn Shrapnel



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8 HOOTENANNY 4PM - 8PM / FREE PROFANE ORDER HUMAN AGONY 8PM PAIN APPENDIX SHIBBOLETH \$10	9 BOY HARSHER WIRE SPINE VOID MIRROR REDRESS 9PM / \$20	10 BLACK SHEEP COMEDY // 8PM GRAYSON WALKER'S KARAOKE FREE // 9PM - 1AM	11 RETROWAVE WEDNESDAY VIC VINYL MEET - UP DJs + RECORD BUY/SELL 8PM / FREE	12 DEAD SOFT BRUTAL POODLE POOCHED CROWN 9PM / \$10	13 FRIDAY THE 13TH 9PM	14 MENDOZZA BUZZARD HERON CHUNKASAURUS 8PM / \$15
15 HOOTENANNY 4PM - 8PM / FREE Verboten Victoria GOO / TERROR APART BIG DEBBIE 8PM PSYCHIC POLLUTION VOID MIRROR \$10	16 VORPAL GNOME GAMES NIGHT 7PM // FREE	17 BLACK SHEEP COMEDY // 8PM GRAYSON WALKER'S KARAOKE FREE // 9PM - 1AM	18 RETROWAVE WEDNESDAY 8PM / FREE	19 LO WAIGHT & THE RATTLESNAKES LDR SOLAR YETI 7:30PM / \$10	20 FULLY CRAZED MIESHA THE SPANKS HEDKS THE HEX 9PM	21 Q5 ROADRASH GATEKEEPER 9PM / \$15
22 HOOTENANNY 4PM - 8PM / FREE SUNDAY SWING 8:30PM / FREE	23 VORPAL GNOME GAMES NIGHT 7PM // FREE	24 BLACK SHEEP COMEDY // 8PM GRAYSON WALKER'S KARAOKE FREE // 9PM - 1AM	25 CABAL METAL NIGHT 8PM / FREE	26 BLACK DOG Led Zeppelin Tribute MK-V & STARDOG 9PM / \$10	27 BAD HOO SURE PLEASURE BLIMPS 9PM / \$10	28 NO HEART RIVAL GANG OFF THE CLOCK DJ LONGSHOT 9PM / \$12
29 HOOTENANNY 4PM - 8PM / FREE	30 LIVE DATING GAME + VORPAL GNOME GAMES NIGHT 7PM // FREE	APRIL 2018 LOGANS PUB EVENTS				MONDAY - THURSDAY: 3PM - 1AM FRIDAY: NOON - 1AM SATURDAY: 11AM - 1AM SUNDAY: 11AM - 12PM 1821 COOK STREET 250-360-2711

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Absolute Album Reviews



Nervous Triggers – Do the Drool
EP

753106 Records DK

With heavy chords, a melodic keyboard, and punchy lyrics, Nervous Triggers' *Do the Drool* will get you off your feet and droolin' with the title track first out the gate. They've got a surf-punk Mummies-vibe crossed with The PIST, and are bringing the best of old school punk rock into 2018. Jay Insult leads the pack on the mic, shouting clever lyrics about modern struggles like organized religion, war, racialized violence, and comic book terrorist organizations. The album finishes up with "Bricks and Mortars," which has a country/western groove while talking about western imperialism in the Middle East. Fitting. Overall this EP is on fire, and I can't wait 'til they get up to Canada so I can shout along to their catchy anthems.

Nervous Triggers are:
Jay Insult - lead vocals
Patski - guitar/vocals
J Nixon - bass/vocals
Eric Truchan - drums
nervoustriggers.bandcamp.com/
- Aeryn Shrapnel



Wykan - Solace
Independent

Grand Canyon sized guitar riffs are a great way to start any song and that's just how "Lahppon Olmos" initiates. Followed up by some Hendrix-inspired bluesy passages and then just as you thought it was a good time to light up the lava lamp, some crushing sludge metal smashes you in the face. Very quickly, the stage is set for some drama because who knows what comes next after that.

Things get black-metalish on "The Gathering" as snowy blitzkriegs are hammered out with icy precision. I love the wretched vocals that seem to rasp out from the very depths of an abysmal state of being. I hear a lot of influences on this track ranging from Sabbath to Watain all played out with a real soulful vibe like if Mayhem emerged from the darkened wilderness circa 1970.

The final track "Wykan" has some ballsy lommi-inspired playing that eventually bleeds into Slayer-like brutality that really feeds the beast. This unholy fusion really brings back the memories and lays down some exciting possibilities for future releases by Wykan.

-Dan Potter



Zeke - Hellbender
Relapse Records

After a hellishly long wait, Zeke are back with their first album in fourteen years. The punk legends known for mixing the gritty might of Motorhead with the cartoon fun of The Ramones sound in great form right off the top of the album as "On the Road" kicks out some seriously caffeinated guitar solos. Thankfully, each song continues to snuff out boredom with an all killer and no filler approach.

"Burn" literally sounds like the band is about to spontaneously combust as the snarling vocals spat out over the whip crack of the one hundred mile an hour snare drum will leave any punk extremist dizzy. The fun continues on "AR-15" with the refrain "blow it away, blow it away," whilst the misanthropic anthem is taken even higher with New York Dolls-like guitar leads sped up to an un-godly tempo.

The inhuman speed that these short but damaging blitzkriegs are belted out is truly frightening and definitely makes this Zeke's fastest recording to date.

- Dan Potter



Bloodshot Dawn - Reanimation
Hostile Media

These guys have a lot of talent between them. Right off the top, they get down to business ripping on some massive thick grooves that are super heavy. There are copious amounts of metal beat-downs, whether it's in the forceful vocal growls or the never-ending guitar virtuoso tag teams. "Survival Evolved" has a melodic center that stays catchy even through all the intensity and instrumental indulgences.

Keeping things classic on "Controlled Consciousness" works well, the Lamb of God riffage and grinding vocals are a real pleasure to hear when done right. They clearly know their metal history, but they also take things out further with plenty of crazy guitar tapping and really interesting verse structures. The groove metal anthem "Soul Affliction" has wicked tight sweep techniques that are out of this world, it helps to have some of the best guitarists guest on your album; people like Jeff Loomis and Mendel Bij De Leij.

If you are looking for a fun and challenging ride, don't delay in checking out this UK group.

-Dan Potter



Greber - Cemetery Preston
Pink Lemonade Records

Sometimes guitars are just too wimpy. Those little annoying strings and all the squealing they do can betray potential heaviness. So this duo has decided to banish them entirely, all in favour of thick bass strings and battered drumheads. The sound is like nothing you would find cruising the upper atmosphere, as the frequencies are pure dead weight.

"The Wreckers" comes out of the hole like some furious grind-core obsessed creature with twenty-inch biceps. To say these guys play a muscular type of metal is an understatement; each track is a meaty blast of crazed testosterone that freaked-out headbangers will love. Sludgy distorted bass riffs get hammered to a sharp point on "By Any Other Name," as a wicked Imam barks out intestine-damaging screams of tortured recollections that consist of stellar lyrics like "severed the hand of the master, but you're still a slave."

Greber is one heavy unit; their music will sink its tusks into you and never let go.

-Dan Potter



Hallux - Hallux Independent

"Herders of the Weak" gets things slamming right off the top, with rumbling bass lines and some scary larynx shredding. The palm-muted guitar riff is psycho in a Suicidal Tendencies sort of way, which is sure to get the pit swirling. Their brand of blackened-thrash really takes a cool melodic turn on "Master Machine" as the guitar riffs go for a walk, creating some lommi-approved orchestrations.

"Call of the Blackbird" has that Venom-like wrath, kicking over the coffins and letting the corpses fall on the mortuary floor. Well-refined death metal growls serve as the pallbearer, and bloody gore is being commemorated with razor sharp attack. Most tracks stick it to you in under three minutes, keeping things moving at a breakneck pace like a vignette of different horror stories all told in a "life flashing before your eyes" sort of way. These guys are definitely extremists and love art when it's blackened by the hands of evil. Impaled by the furious speed, this debut album is truly a beast and the future of Hallux looks evil.

-Dan Potter



Dirkschneider
Elm Street
Rebel Priest
Vancouver, BC
March 18, 2018

"Accept what we do
This message to you
Is rock forever and ever
We've still got the feel
The music is real
And we'll rock 'n' roll forever,
forever"

These lyrics that make up the chorus of the song "Feelings," originally written by Accept for their 1981 album *Breaker*, so perfectly represent what true heavy metal is all about. The challenge of building up and running a band like this amongst all the pressure to conform to trends; the financial difficulties brought about by bad record contracts and sleazy managers, and

the risks of stiff competition created by a business model that only allows a small few to rise to the top – all of these things have made life hard for the musician for as long as there has been a music business. Listening to Udo Dirkschneider sing these lyrics in a way only he can really takes these same old themes and amplifies them to the maximum. Any genre that insists on being so loud and proud will often have to face these difficulties in equal measure, and Accept were more than up to the task of cutting through that bullshit to keep going. Dirkschneider's gruff vocal delivery was a very important component of this musical onslaught, and when it was announced that he and his solo group – also called Dirkschneider - would be coming to Vancouver to play a show made up entirely of those classic Udo-era

behind the mic. Thankfully they announced that there would be a second leg of their North American tour in 2018, called "Back To The Roots Tour Part 2" and a Vancouver date was scheduled for March 18. The morning of March 18 began just like January 19, 2017 did, with one major difference - there was no bad news of cancellations to interrupt me as I cranked those same classic songs.

The first opening band scheduled to play was Rebel Priest, a local hard working band that was about to premiere a few brand new songs they had been working on. Doing this at a high profile gig was the kind of ballsy move that showed how ready they were to take the necessary risks that any serious band has to take in order to stand out. The three new songs,

Accept tracks for the very last time, I knew that I had to go.

Tickets were bought quickly, and when the morning of January 19, 2017 came around, I was already playing those classic tracks as a way to stoke my excitement for the show. Then I got the bad news via text from my brother-in-law around noon – the show was cancelled! The band had been trapped on a highway in Oregon by a sudden snow storm and there was no way they would be able to get out in time to make it to Vancouver that evening. It was starting to look like we wouldn't get to see the original voice of Accept sing those classic songs after all. As great as Accept had been when they first played at the Rickshaw Theatre with their new singer Mark Tornillo in 2012, it still wasn't the same without Udo Dirkschneider

Absolute Live Reviews

"Really Heavy""Release The Fire," and "Space Hookers," did have a different sound to them, somewhat bluesier and heavier would be a good general description, but the rest of the crowd still seemed to enjoy them as much as I did. This new sound blended in quite well with "Blade Runner""Giants Of Texas""Blood and Sands" and "London Soho," which have become familiar staples of their live shows. It's unfortunate that their set was only about thirty minutes, and it would've been nice to have seen more people there to watch it, but that's how it goes for opening bands who come on first. Still a very worthwhile performance that gave the audience a good idea of what's ahead for Rebel Priest, who are currently working on a new album.

Next up was Elm Street, an Australian band who was making their Vancouver debut. Before I go any further, I want to say that there was a lot to like about their performance. Very energetic with great musicianship. There were more people in the audience for their set, and from what I could see, the reception was very positive. With that out of the way, I have to be honest about why I wasn't as enthusiastic about it; they sound a lot like Children Of Bodom. I'm a pretty big fan of early Bodom, which by my definition ranges from *Something Wild* through *Are You Dead Yet*, and there were a few too many times where they would play something that sounded a little too much like the songs from those first five studio albums. At least they didn't have a keyboardist; that would have been too much. I suppose I have to give them credit for picking the best era of COB to use as a musical guideline to follow.

The highlight of their set for me was the well executed cover of "Metal Health" by Quiet Riot. As the sound crew was finishing their soundcheck, the Rickshaw Theatre was full of fans anticipating the show they had been waiting over a year to see. Then the lights went down and "Fire" by The Crazy World Of Arthur Brown played over the PA as a sort of warning to prepare us for what was to come. Just as the song was ending, members of the band emerged on stage. Now it was time. The musical assault began with "The Beast Inside," a surprising but still very fitting choice to set the tone for the evening. Dirkschneider had been saying that this second leg of the tour would feature a few changes in the setlist which would include some songs from the 90s. As good as those three reunion era albums were, the musical landscape in North America had changed, and like many other previously popular heavy metal bands from the 80s, they found their work being met with much less reception than before. I have to give him credit for not ignoring this time period. "The Beast Inside," "Bulletproof," "Amamos La Vida," and "Objection Overruled" sounded every bit as good along side 80s classics like "Midnight Mover," "Fight It Back," "London Leatherboys," "Breaker," and "Love Child."

The band was laying down a tight performance and Udo was in good voice, propelling them forward and locking in the crowd with several more choice cuts like "Aiming High," "Living For Tonight," "Another Second To Be," "Can't Stand The Night," (one of my favourite Accept ballads) "Up To The Limit," "Screaming For A Love Bite," and "Russian Roulette."

Both guitarists had a few occasions to show off with solos that didn't carry on too long or diminish the excitement of the crowd. As they left the stage to take a breather before the encore, there wasn't any doubt what songs they were saving for last. Up to this point, everybody in the audience, from those on the floor to those in the seated section in the back had not only heard but also literally felt the well organized rebellious noise that Dirkschneider had been pumping out into the venue. As they came back out and finished off with "Princess Of The Dawn," "Metal Heart," "Fast As A Shark," and "Balls To The Wall," they somehow managed to increase the intensity of this experience just a little bit more. Audience participation is pretty much mandatory when any anthemic numbers are played, and he gave us plenty of opportunities to join in. It felt like he may have got us to sing along a few more times than usual, which was probably done to reinforce the significance of what he would be leaving behind after this show was over.

The band members who joined Udo Dirkschneider on stage may have been different this time around, but that feel of real heavy metal music that Accept had first written about in 1981 was still present to everyone of us in 2018. Now that I've seen what he can deliver live, I'm even more excited at the possibility to see him perform a show made up exclusively of U.D.O. songs. I can only hope that he and his band aren't prevented from doing so by any freak storms or accidents when that time comes.

- William Liira



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Dwarves

Interview with Blag Dahlia
By Jason Lamb

Absolute Underground: Your new album *Take Back The Night* is, in my opinion, some of the best work you've done.

Blag: Thank you, wow! I appreciate that. The Dwarves are the only band that gets old and keeps making cool records. There is one, and it's us.

AU: I love the humility that you have.

Blag: I try to call it like I see it.

AU: You guys are getting better and better, that's for sure. I want to talk about the album cover, there's no naked ladies on the cover this time around.

Blag: No, no naked ladies, or as they call them there, "Barenaked Ladies."

AU: Nice little Canadian reference there.

Blag: We do have drugs, and we're dabbling in the diversity element, you know we brought in black people on this one. I think we're doing our job.

AU: Yeah, it's very forward-thinking of you. I've noticed that you've supplied clean versions online of some songs on this one. Is that something you've done in the past?

Blag: I make clean versions for movies, TV, whatever, if someone wants a song but they can't have a swear in it. That way we can really get the kids involved.

AU: There is an interesting quote you have on The Dwarves Facebook page, it was from All Music, "If it wasn't for all the blood and nudity, they'd be huge." I wonder if you feel there is any truth to that?

Blag: Yes, I mean who wants to be poor and unknown? But that's just the way the cookie crumbled. It's like, in order to be who we are you can't tone it down, you just do variations on it, and every once in a while you get songs like "Salt Lake City," where it's like, "Oh, this is clean and it could actually be a hit!" but then you quickly realize that when you're as dirty as us, that you're just tainted forever. They just won't come near you. It's also that people judge you on what they first hear, so to a lot of people, we're "Blood, Guts, and Pussy," and that's all we'll ever be.

AU: I do stand up comedy as well and I get into lots of fights with these incredibly oversensitive people these days.

Blag: Yeah, comedy and music has really changed tremendously. I think all the arts have changed

us, they can't do what we do, they can't perform musically the way that we do, they haven't made enough of a study of it to do something like that. It's extremely difficult to assemble a team like that. I don't want to sound pretentious but there is just a lot more that goes into these records than, "hey, we said fuck!" It reminds me of that old Eddie Murphy routine, people would walk up to him like, "Oh, you Eddie Murphy, you great comedian... Fuck! Fuck!" like that was all he was saying, and it's like, "No, I don't just get up and say fuck, I actually do things."

AU: You are going to be part of a show called Punk Against Trump.

Blag: Nobody tells me anything, you know? They call me up and say, hey do you want to play something with TSOL? Next thing I know it's something about Trump and look, I don't like Trump. I think he's an ignoramus and I think he's a fascist, pure and simple. A couple of things, I said he's going to win and everyone laughed at me, and I said, "No this is our country, sadly," and the day that he was inaugurated, I said, "This is now deep fascism in a way people in America don't understand it can be." It's 1934 all over again and people, they've always lived in a democracy more or less, and so they don't really understand what a fascist regime is. It was all the hallmarks of it, bring in your family, lionize the military while belittling them. Anything that a fascist dictator has done, this guy has done already. It's undermining faith in our institutions but you know what, Trump is just a symptom of what was already there. I'm certainly against him but people

aren't really coming to Blag for their political views, but if somebody asks me, sure I'll play. Since we've listed that show people have attacked me like, "This is some PC shit, this isn't you guys," and I had to remind them that no, liberals still hate us, so I'm still giving them the finger in the eye but that doesn't give the fascists a pass.

AU: This "We Got Issues," thing you're doing, is

THE PUNK SHOW

it a podcast?

Blag: It's a podcast that I do with my friend No Name, and Heather Hamann. Cumulus Media has taken our podcast and they were like, "Hey we want to try this out on the radio," so the past couple of weeks it's been playing on commercial radio in San Francisco. I can't believe it, I can drive around and listen to myself talking shit. It feels kind of surreal, like who the fuck is listening to me for advice? I would encourage anyone to go to wegotissues.net, or send your issues in and we will answer your issues. There has already been like 35 episodes of the show. I'm thrilled with it.

AU: I notice your band tends to do little spurts of shows, no pun intended, as opposed to big long tours.

Blag: Yeah, I mean big long tours really destroy lives. I mean you come back and your cat's dead, and your wife has left you, your electricity is turned off. There are a lot of things in the music industry that are set up for bigger bands, and then all the little bands do it. So it's like rent a bus so you can waste all of your fuckin money, but you do it so you can pretend like you're awesome and you're important. Or like, get a manger so they can take 20% of the money that they haven't done anything to earn, or the booking agent that calls the same venues that I've been playing at for 20 years. There is a lot of shit in the music industry that is set up to separate musicians from their money, and one of those things is these big long tours that are pointless. We just like to hit and run, play a few shows. It's kind of like how we make records, if you're good, you don't need to 50 takes of the same thing. We go in the studio, we'll play the song four or five times and we got it, because we're good. We go out, we play four or five shows, that's fun. Playing 30 shows, that's not fun for me, I'm not 20 anymore.

www.thedwarves.com/

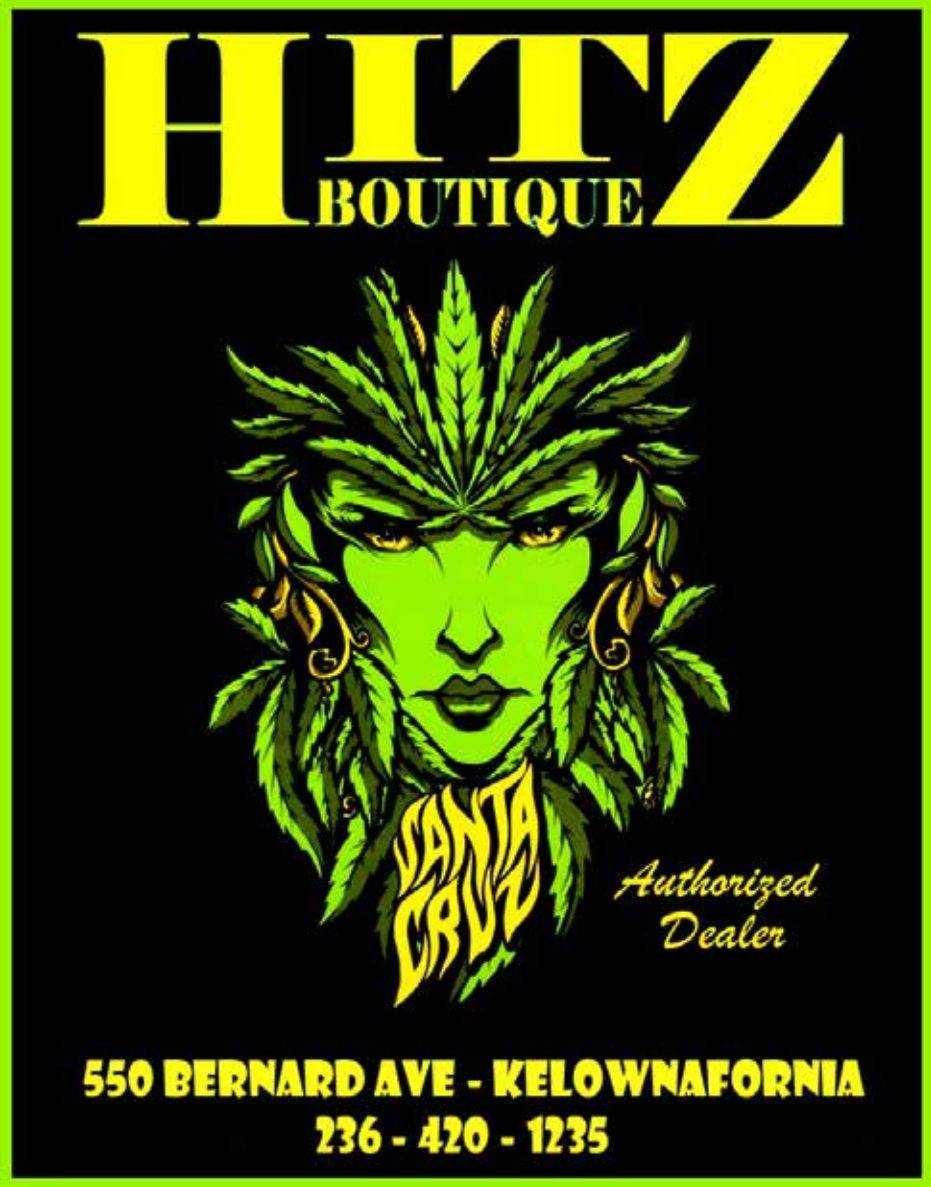
PHOTO CREDIT: Cameron Postforoosh

DWARVES

now because of the new "PC" thing. What is so destructive about it, is that it discourages any conversation at all. People wind up coming to the conclusion, "I just won't mention sex, I just won't mention race, I just won't mention kids, I just won't mention anything that might offend people." So before you know it the conversation has ended. It isn't even a question of saying, "I disagree with you so let's have a discussion." It's just, "How dare you even have a discussion about anything." It's really the most destructive thing that's happened to western civilization, and it's sad because it's supposed to be well meaning like, "Hey, we're making the world better!" but all they're doing is making it worse by shutting down a conversation. They're going after mosquitoes with an elephant gun. The sad part about it is this stuff used to come from conservatism, but now it comes from liberalism, and it's really something you have to watch in a place like punk rock that is so dominated by that, or in a place like Canada, that is so dominated by that. I just think it's a horrible chilling effect, that's cut off discussion. It's kind of made a mockery out of it. This is when the enemy wins. The Dwarves will just never put up with that. When I was doing this shit 20 years ago, it was like yeah you're doing some offensive shit, but now it's just like "You're old, you don't get it." Oh no, we get it. We understand this is upsetting to you, you need to look at why it's so upsetting to you.

AU: Well what I was kind of getting at was with you and with The Dwarves, because you're so much the other way, it's almost like you're untouchable. It's like where do they even start? You guys got blood soaked naked ladies, you must blow their minds.

Blag: It's only because we've been ignored so much. I could say the same thing, like wow, the labels we were on never censored us, but it's because they weren't paying any attention to us and they didn't give a fuck. You gotta pick your poison, most people want to be famous and recognized. Musicians censor themselves, comics censor themselves. Nobody escapes the new church ladies. The Dwarves have always stood in complete opposition of that, we always have, and I hope people get that we mean it in a kind-hearted way, but if they don't, then fuck 'em. I don't care, I'm not that kind-hearted. It's a lot harder to be The Dwarves than you might think. We've talked about the whole insulting or PC part of it, but then there is the whole music





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Interview by AU Editorial

E: You're talking to the whole gang, we're infamous for our live energy. One of us will puke, one of us will break stuff, and one of us is straight edge.

E: The band is composed of Tyler on vocals, Warren on guitar, Colin on bass and Brett on drums/producing. Warren and Brett have been playing in bands for almost a decade; we decided what we were doing at the time was not challenging to us as musicians. Eventually, after many member changes, we found people who could tolerate us for who we are, and do the band we wanted to do since we started EXITS. Tyler joined just before the writing process of *Self Deprecation*, and Colin joined us as we started writing *The Waste Class*.

E: Musically speaking it's more mature and experimental compared to our last releases. We've all had the chance to grow over the last couple years and in spite of our differences, we found a groove where the writing process came together naturally. Thematically speaking, it's different from our earlier releases because

E: All of the recording was done at Brett's house over the span of two years. We spent more time perfecting every detail for each song and would sometimes re-record the same songs to ensure it was up to our "standards." Brett took the time to experiment with different soundscapes and push the experimental limits of *The Waste Class*. Fans can expect the usual DIY process, however, *The Waste Class* will stand out as its own entity; we're pursuing the idea of invoking a range of emotions, instead of being 100% pissed off all the time.

E: We just hope people like it as much as we do. As long as people pay to get in, who gives a fuck?

E: *The Waste Class* will be available on all streaming services. We plan to have tapes and CDs on our upcoming American tour with The Central. Our vinyl release is to be announced.

AU: You'll be doing a short international West Coast tour in May to follow the release, tell us about it! Are there any cities you'll be visiting for the first time? Any cities

E: Tour is a whirlwind of emotion. The idea of touring with EXITS can be summed up in a couple sentences: Ol' Faithful is usually the fact that Colin gets a concussion. We've become very good at playing brain dead™ (that's something you won't find on Google). As far as future touring goes, we're discussing the possibility of a European tour.

E: We have a couple videos that will be released this summer. After our tour of the States we'd like to see how our album is received and build from there.

E: One of us is straight edge, gotta figure out which one.

E: If you've made it this far, thanks for reading and we hope you enjoy *The Waste Class*. If you get the chance to see us on this tour, come and say hi.

facebook.com/exitsband/
http://exitsband.bandcamp.
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Emerald City and Capital City Cons in Recap

By Ed Sum

Emerald City Comic Con (ECCC) is one of those shows which defines the Pacific Northwest. It is

ranked as the third largest in North America, and I have been attending it for seven years straight. Although it has changed from its early years of being independently run to become part of the ReedPOP empire, and now boasts a four-day show, they always have some aspect to surprise and impress attendees.

Compared to new events popping up, like Victoria's own Capital City Comic Con (4C), I believe this smaller show can hold its own. This garden city show is not trying to compete; it is a much more relaxed show. CCCC is carving a niche for itself by spotlighting Canadian talents (celebrity guests, artists or otherwise) and showing what "buy local" means.

Staples in the Seattle-based show include Dark Horse Comics, BOOM! Studios, Valient and IDW. One year, Marvel and DC will consider becoming regulars. As for Victoria's con, they have Chapterhouse Comics, and mentioned on Facebook they would love to come back. My hope is that Burnaby, BC based Arcana Comics will follow suit.

Attending any event here on the Pacific Northwest should not be about what big names are appearing. "Victoria is a totally different market than Vancouver," revealed Woodward, co-owner of the family-run business, Cherry Bomb Toys, and one of the chiefs behind 4C. "A fan here may be ecstatic over one of the guests we got, like James Marsters, but elsewhere, the attitude is like 'Oh, we saw him last week.'"

Since I have attended ECCC and Fan Expo Vancouver long enough, the names are not always the attraction. I'm now seeing repeat guests. The announcement of David Tennant certainly made Emerald City Comic Con memorable. Matthew Lewis (pictured here) certainly had a lot of Harry Potter fans



happy. Of the others who were present, meeting Felicia Day made my weekend. She even answered a fanboy question: if she could come back to The CW's *Supernatural*, she'd like to return as a result of a magical invocation gone wrong, and the brothers would have to rescue her to complete the resurrection. Other guests like James Marsters and Graham McTavish can be found regularly doing the convention tour. Their attendance of Victoria, BC means this city is now on the radar.

Larger shows means companies like Weta Workshop can visit to show what their studio is all about. They are a staple at Emerald City, and in

due time, 4C will reach this plateau as well. For this garden city show, I thought Chapterhouse Comics took up a significant corner of the show floor and I am glad! They had the best panel out of all the show, since it drove home what they are about and what this convention should become. On their Facebook page, they announced a desire to come back. They had a great time at this show and their panel was all about telling fans that supporting Canadiana is important.

All conventions have a lot in common. There will be cosplay, artist sketch battles, fan meetups, introductions to new parts of fandom, company update panels and celebrity (comic book too) Q&A's. These aspects are the blood of the show, and seeing this diversity is fantastic! Some attendees simply go to shop and they are missing

COMIC-GEDDON

out. The variety of entertainment offered will vary per regional show. ECCC has Twisted Toonz—



which is always fantastic—and burlesque! Here, the voice-over talent read from a famous movie in a cartoon voice. The results are hilarious! Both the former and the latter can get very raunchy, I often blush. 4C started off very strong with Vancouver, BC's Geekenders—also burlesque! I like to know how they will top that, or if this group will be part of the annual show.

The month of March is a busy one for this fan, as I support both shows. The gem is Seattle's con because there's a lot to soak in. Capital City is small enough to feel less stressful. Intentional or not, I truly appreciate the carnival atmosphere found at the Crystal Gardens side of the exhibit hall, as I rarely experience this vibe at other cons. Perhaps that's a good thing, to make Capital City Comic Con stand out.

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Geoff Dermer

Interview by Malcolm Hassin

Absolute Underground: What's your earliest memory of skateboarding?

GD: I saw a banana board, fiberglass, at this outdoor thrift sale thing that my family stopped at while we were driving across Australia. A couple weeks later, it was Christmas and I got it! I was five, I think.

AU: Where are you from?

GD: Born and raised right here in Vancouver, but growing up I got to go to Australia a couple times. I remember skateboarding everywhere down there.

AU: What was your stomping ground here in Vancouver?

GD: First it was the block with my buddies, skating curbs, then it was just the neighbourhood with friends. But where I was taught the culture and all the rest first was China Creek, I got to go to China Creek in the 80s... the scenes that I saw and the things that I witnessed and took in there as a young lad, it was the coolest thing I had ever seen. Definitely China Creek as a kid

when I was 10, he was 30... he was already the elder, and the fact that he made it cool with my parents that they would drop me at China Creek at age 10 and leave me there, it was the best I was the littlest kid.

AU: Any memorable stories about China Creek?

GD: I think jut the whole scene. I accidentally showed up at the Jaks Comp in '89, my parents drove us there, surprise contest. I remember there were these guys with a case of beer on their shoulder, taking a piss in the bush and that was the scene as we rolled up.

AU: What was it like in the '90s compared to now?

GD: I wouldn't know really how to compare the two eras we have gone through. Back then, I think it was a lot smaller, there was a lot less of us. I remember thinking like at a contest, "Is that everyone?" Growing up and seeing everything in real life as opposed to videos, being at Slam City jam every single day, every moment there would be something happening all around. It's different nowadays, but it's different in a lot of good ways, too. Back then, it was very limited where you could go to actually have a session. We really tried to hold down new spot, there was highs and lows about it, it was really exciting and awesome, but

SHRED SESSION

it was also kind of annoying always being on the lookout for cops. Keeping six is just what you did, now I see a cop I pick up my board and walk away, 'cause it's inbedded in me, to watch out for the law. By the time I was 20, the next generation to come up under me, they didn't know about that, because it all ended basically because downtown got capped in '97. We felt connected to all of skateboarding because of Slam City.

AU: What about the Cract Pipe Era?

GD: It was tight. The Cract Pipe was poppin', that was the coolest place for the winter, for a kid born and raised in East Van to be at some of the Cract Pipe sessions was so sick. Thanks to everyone, a lot of people contributed to make that place go down... Thanks everyone.

AU: How did Kitsch come about?

GD: What really inspired me to try and do it was a trip to Buenos Aries, in Argentina. I was skating the RDS park and I heard Richard Sarrazin talking about going to Buenos Aries, I muscled my way in somehow, and went on the trip. Through my sponsor, Satori, I'd heard that I had to holler at Mariano, Mariano Gonzales. The dude met us at the airport and took us on a 12-day tour. I came back with a different perception of what a small board company could be, because I watched how it was down there in Argentina. Their dollar crashed, and they pretty much blamed America, a set of Spitfire wheels would cost \$150 for them, we would be buying sandwiches for 60 cents and the guys wouldn't have one, they had their own everything. We came back with magazines and I came back to my house, every page for a truck or show company with no US influence. This Mariano guy showed me a board company can be what ever you decide it can be, you can do anything with it. This guy had his own brand, and yet didn't have a car, he would take us skating on the bus and would bring three boards, when we would be skating he would leave and come

back, he was restocking all his accounts, he just took us on his re-stock the shop with his boards tour. I was 26. I first got hooked up when I was 16, people had given me boards for ten years, then this trip happened. I had all these nice fluke video part opportunities on my way... but I didn't really want to move to California, I thought if I could just do a board company here, it would be worth trying. I did the math of what it would take to give four of my friends boards, how much to do one lap around the track and break even. Before I had a name, I decided I wanted to do it. I called and artist friend on the island, we bashed names around, and the name came up "kitsch," google image was already a thing. I liked how it looked, with the K and the S in the middle and how it looked balanced, then I google imaged it, and realized it's a crazy word, it has almost a 100 different meanings, could be as wild as gold plated toilet seats or Michael Jackson diamond statues. There were 30 chapters about this word, and ways it changed definition over time. I liked the word so much, and felt like I should do it. It might have been since Ben Chibber started Monkey in the 90s that someone tried to give a go in Vancouver, so I felt like I wasn't going to be stepping on anybody's toes. Only thing to lose was to not try at that point. And what it is now is what I hoped it would be, it's about a group and having a team, skating together and producing stuff where we push each other to come up with our best stuff, complementing one another. It's just a session. I try and do a new board each year, and now it's been going on for 11 years.

kitschskateboards.com/
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PHOTO CREDIT: Adam Balls

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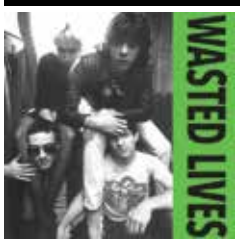





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